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Tim Street

The Politics of Nuclear Disarmament:

**Obstacles to and Opportunities for Eliminating Nuclear Weapons In and Between
the Nuclear Weapon States**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a PhD in Politics and
International Studies conducted in the Department of Politics and International
Studies at the University of Warwick**

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own work of research. In preparing this dissertation, I followed the guidelines established in the Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research of the University of Warwick. This dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Tim Street

Note on terminology

The 'official' nuclear weapon states (NWS) under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) are China, France, Russia, the UK and US. The NPT (United Nations, 2000) defines an NWS as one 'which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967'. Members of the NPT without nuclear weapons are known as non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS). The designation of former nuclear weapon states (FNWS) is used to refer to NWS that in future complete the disarmament process, for the political and technical reasons explained below. The four nuclear-armed states (NAS) that are not members of the NPT are North Korea, India, Pakistan and Israel. NWS and NAS collectively are referred to as nuclear weapon possessor states (NPS).

Abstract

This thesis examines what political conditions must be established and what obstacles overcome, nationally and internationally, in order for the five 'official' nuclear weapon states (NWS) under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT)—China, France, Russia, the UK and the US—to abolish their nuclear weapons. In order to assess the explanatory power of existing mainstream and realist perspectives regarding the causes and consequences of NWS nuclear possession and disarmament, a substantial evidence base is utilised. Academic, advocacy and government documents, as well as interviews with a range of practitioners in this field, are drawn on to develop an institutional-historical analysis of nuclear politics in and between NWS. From this assessment of the existing literature, it is argued that whilst mainstream and realist works have some value, there are several gaps in and problems with their analysis that need to be addressed. For example, such works do not provide a full account of nuclear politics because they mainly focus on the international level, so that the role domestic politics plays in nuclear matters is not properly considered. In order to rectify this deficiency, I adopt a critical and normative approach and develop the domestic politics model of nuclear possession to better imagine the political causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament. The approach adopted, which I term *institutional democratisation*, proposes that if nuclear weapons are to be permanently eliminated then legitimate forms of power, including popular, democratic movements driven by principles of equality and justice, need to be developed in NWS that are capable of controlling and eliminating

the bomb. This is necessary because the behaviour of nuclear weapon decision-making elites across NWS—and the institutions they inhabit and maintain—present the principal barrier to meaningful progress on eliminating nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament will thus both contribute to reformed domestic, regional and international political orders and benefit from wider, progressive change at each of these levels.

List of Abbreviations

ABMT	Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty
AWE	Atomic Weapons Establishment
BASIC	British American Security Information Council
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
BRICS	Brazil; Russia; India; China; South Africa
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Environment
EU	European Union
FMCT	Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty
FNWS	Former nuclear weapon state
GRIT	Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile

ICJ	International Court of Justice
IHL	international humanitarian law
IMEMO	Russian Institute of World Economy and International Relations
INF	Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
IR	International relations
MIRV	Multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle
MIC	Military industrial complex
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NAS	Nuclear armed state
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NNSA	National Nuclear Security Administration
NPR	Nuclear Posture Review
NPS	Nuclear possessor state
NPT	Nuclear non-proliferation treaty
NSS	National Security Strategy
NWS	Nuclear weapon state
NNWS	Non-nuclear weapon state

NPG	Nuclear planning group
NWFW	Nuclear weapons free world
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PAROS	Prevention of an arms race in outer space
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PNND	Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament
PRC	People's Republic of China
RCW	Reaching Critical Will
RRW	Reliable Replacement Warhead
RevCon	Review Conference
SCO	Shanghai Co-operation Organisation
SNP	Scottish National Party
SSBN	Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TNW	Tactical nuclear weapons
UN	United Nations
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction

Introduction

Why nuclear disarmament?

Despite humanity having accumulated a range of relevant knowledge and experience the project of eliminating nuclear weapons—the most powerful weapons ever invented—will, for the nuclear possessor states (NPS) and the rest of the world, essentially be a voyage into the unknown. For those who believe that nuclear weapons bring security, stability and freedom to their nations, including prominent strategic analysts such as Frank Miller (2009), Brad Roberts (2015) and Bruno Tertrais (2011 i), this voyage is unappealing because it is fraught with costs, risks and uncertainty given the high stakes and limited benefits involved. Opponents of disarmament, such as former senior White House officials Harold Brown and John Deutch (2007), also claim that the nuclear ‘genie’ cannot be put back in the bottle and that nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented.

Yet for those who reject nuclear weapons as illegal, immoral and insane—including prominent voices in the global nuclear disarmament movement such as Desmond Tutu, David Krieger (2014) and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (2011)—this voyage is essential if humanity is to reach safe haven and liberate itself from the dominance of the overly powerful and the continued threat of annihilation. From the latter perspective, the risks involved in disarming are

manageable and ultimately negligible compared to those of the status quo. The nuclear genie can thus be dealt with by delegitimising the bomb so that it is as socially unacceptable as cannibalism or slavery (Lee, 1996: 319). In addition, sensitive nuclear weapons information may be destroyed and related knowledge and skills may be allowed to atrophy (Datan et al 2007, 139). Whichever position one takes on this issue, mapping out as far as possible the terrain that will likely need to be traversed in order to move towards abolition is a useful task if governments and people everywhere are to make informed decisions regarding the future of nuclear weapons—both for their own nations and the world.

As we shall see, the idea and imagery of time is as important to this discussion as that of space given that nuclear disarmament is a social and political process without a final end point. For Jonathan Schell (2000: 108) this therefore requires a political solution that is ‘global and everlasting’. According to this speculative logic, even if the voyage of discovery for each NPS ends with zero nuclear weapons this state will need to be maintained through good relations between nations, anchored in durable institutions, given that, as Ian Anthony (2011: 11) points out, ‘the knowledge needed to rebuild nuclear weapons will never be forgotten, and by extension there is no exclusively technical guarantee against nuclear re-armament’.

Time is also important in the sense that nuclear disarmament may be seen as an urgent necessity because of the significant risk of nuclear detonation that would likely, in most scenarios, have catastrophic consequences. Seth Baum (2014) has

therefore argued that ‘Nuclear war is the black swan we can never see, except in that brief moment when it is killing us. We delay eliminating the risk at our own peril.’ Concern over nuclear proliferation and rising international tensions led the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (2017) to announce in 2017 that the world is ‘two and a half minutes to midnight’ because ‘over the course of 2016 the global security landscape darkened as the international community failed to come effectively to grips with humanity’s most pressing existential threats, nuclear weapons and climate change.’

Given the continuing threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the instability and fallibility of deterrence, this study therefore engages with the argument that nuclear disarmament is both vital and realisable as a global public good. The need for fresh and clear thinking on this issue is also important because, as the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (2008) notes, despite hopes of a peace dividend following the end of the Cold War, disarmament is today ‘in disarray’ as the US pursued ‘absolute global superiority’ and denigrated ‘international institutions and instruments’. Furthermore, as Catherine Kelleher (2011: 7) highlights, there has been an ‘unknowing’ of previous disarmament efforts so that a new generation of officials and students are unfamiliar with the relevant history. Similarly, Lawrence Wittner (2010: 7) identifies the 1980s as the ‘heyday’ of the nuclear disarmament movement and argues that today’s movement is ‘considerably weaker’. From these salutary observations flows the proposal that academia, civil

society and governments in NPS need to devote far more resources to create the ideas, time and space for disarmament.

It is perhaps necessary to state at this point that those who adopt a normative position and advocate nuclear disarmament, may be said to follow natural historians such as Peter Kropotkin (1939), in taking an optimistic view of human nature and the potential for people—given the presence of favourable social conditions—to use their intelligence, creativity and skills towards cooperative and peaceful rather than hostile and warlike ends as suggested by social Darwinism (Hofstadter, 1992). Yet, as Bertrand Russell (1961: 12) argued, the ‘division of man into competing and often hostile nations’ and the emergence of ‘scientific man’ capable of creating nuclear weapons has led to humanity facing the question—‘Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?’ Russell’s observations may lead us to consider not only who and what stands in the way of more equitable and just societies but who and what stands in the way of the prospects for decent survival on this planet.

This study addresses these questions by seeking to understand what the existence, use and abolition of nuclear weapons means for the world in relation to the principles of equality and justice. It is argued that these issues can only be dealt with through an assessment of each state’s strategic power and behaviour. To begin with, there is a much greater concentration of such power in NPS, held in the hands of small elite groups. To properly map these power structures and differentiate the

types and degree of power held between different actors it is necessary to ask several further questions. For example, which people, groups and institutions legitimate, value and reproduce nuclear weapons and resist demands for disarmament? Why do they do this? What impact do nuclear weapons have on domestic and international politics and what drives nuclear proliferation? And what is the current state of the national and international movements for nuclear abolition?

In seeking to answer these questions, this study has itself been bound by limits of time and space that raise certain practical and theoretical problems. For example, whilst there are nine NPS and 180 NNWS, this study principally focuses on the politics of nuclear disarmament in the five NWS so that neither the four NAS nor the NNWS are addressed in-depth. In order for the politics of a nuclear weapons free world (NFWF) to be fully explored the obstacles to and opportunities for disarmament in and between all the NPS and NNWS would need to be included. The intention here is thus to contribute to the existing literature and lay some of the initial groundwork for such future studies. In any case it is reasonable to focus solely on the NWS as a grouping given their obligations to disarm under the NPT, the fact that Russia and the US possess 93% of the world's 16,000 nuclear weapons and the immense literature on nuclear matters which this thesis has attempted to select from and discuss as judiciously as possible.

Even for the limited scope of this study the exclusion of the NAS and NNWS is problematic given that moves towards disarmament involving NWS will, at some stage, also have to consider how NAS and NNWS can and should be involved. This again raises the question of where responsibility for NWS disarmament lies and how it may be differentiated between relevant actors both internal and external to NWS. The approach I have taken to this issue is to highlight where appropriate the relationships between NWS and NAS/NWS and NNWS so as to give a sense of the role nuclear weapons play in shaping the wider international order. I do this primarily in Part Two when discussing the nuclear politics of each of the NWS. In doing so I argue that NWS have a responsibility for both national nuclear disarmament and to act in ways that support the creation of a NFWF—which covers a much wider range of behavior including non-proliferation, conflict prevention/resolution and demilitarisation. Moreover, I posit that the US has a particularly great responsibility here given its immense military might which has a singular impact on all other nation's strategic thought.

Situating this thesis in the literature

Whilst there is a wide range of works from academic and non-academic authors addressing the topic of abolishing nuclear weapons, many just focus on juridical and/or technical aspects, excluding substantive political discussions on a domestic and international level. Examples of the former include studies regarding the possible legal instruments supportive of disarmament, whilst studies in the latter

category include discussions of the different levels of irreversibility or verification requirements involved in disarmament. Furthermore, many of those taking a political approach to disarmament tend to limit themselves for one reason or another. This can occur, for example, when studies are partisan and insensitive to the subjective nature of nuclear disarmament so that their treatment of the issue becomes prone to narrow and Western-centric assumptions. Other studies suffer by omitting important types of information, whether legal, technical or political. In the case of several mainstream studies this includes the part domestic politics—for example, public opinion, the role and nature of the state and political economy—has and might play in nuclear weapons decision-making, past, present and future.

It will be argued below that this state of affairs has led to academics, activists, experts and government officials often talking past one another when discussing nuclear matters because they start from different underlying assumptions and thus use and understand ideas and language around nuclear disarmament in quite different ways. The result is that there is no shared grammar of nuclear disarmament and what it might mean in practice. We might speculate on the causes of this problem—the lack of public awareness, engagement and understanding of nuclear issues—particularly after the Cold War, the fact nuclear disarmament is in several aspects ‘unknowable’, or the way in which nuclear disarmament is seen as taboo for some given its political implications, thus becoming a site of ideological contestation.

To get a general sense of how nuclear disarmament has been conceived it is useful to sketch out and compare two of the more prominent current schools of thought on the issue. For example, a view held amongst many pro-disarmament activists and campaigners (Nystuen & Eide, 2013, Johnson, 2014; Fihn, 2015), is that banning the bomb is mainly, if not all, about just getting rid of nuclear arsenals and that all these weapons are equally abhorrent. According to this universalist view, which is primarily driven by a moral and humanitarian impulse, using legal instruments to ban nuclear weapons would not mean significant changes to the current international order, would be relatively straightforward in terms of costs and technical requirements and should be isolated from debates about national and regional security to focus on common human needs. Many within the disarmament movement, including those from more radical political traditions, also highlight the domestic impact of nuclear possession, particularly the undemocratic and secretive nature of nuclear weapons, and argue that disarmament and demilitarisation is necessary for social justice at home and abroad.

A different view, held typically by academics, government officials and policy professionals working within mainstream bodies in both East and West, is that nuclear deterrence is highly valuable as a means of preventing war between the great powers and ensuring international stability. This is because the nuclear revolution ensures that no matter how powerful a nation's military is, nuclear weapons are impossible to defend against. A nuclear possessor may therefore prevent an attack by an otherwise stronger aggressor. The issue of nuclear

disarmament is thus bound up with military and state power more broadly, since conventional and nuclear weapons have important qualitative differences with strategic consequences (Acton & Perkovich, 2010; Primakov et al, 2010). According to this differentiating view, which is primarily driven by political and security concerns, a NWFN would entail a transformed international order, would likely be costly, destabilising and technically complex and cannot therefore be isolated from debates about security. Moreover, this school of thought largely marginalises or ignores the domestic political causes and consequences of nuclear possession and disarmament. Nuclear deterrence is often also presented as being an unfortunate necessity to ensure national survival in a dangerous and uncertain world and disarmament a noble but distant ambition. Notably, such thinking is as often found amongst elite circles in nuclear possessors with formally liberal and democratic regimes as it is in authoritarian states.

These brief sketches—of what might be termed idealist and realist approaches—whilst simplified, illustrate important truths about the different ways nuclear disarmament is seen. Yet there is little commerce or interaction between these two schools of thought, which tend to exist in their own institutions and circuits. The reason such an engagement would be important is that each school contains gaps in its evidential base, and thus its reasoning, that tends to limit the veracity of its conclusions regarding the causes and consequences of disarmament. Moreover, there are aspects of both schools that are complementary and could be brought together to produce an approach to disarmament including, as Stephen Cimbala

(2009: 29) puts it, ‘a compelling moral imperative and a policy prescription that is strategically sound’. As I shall discuss further below, for the purposes of this thesis I shall adapt and update ideas from the disarmament movement, particularly its 1980s heyday, which take a more radical view of the nuclear disarmament debate, and apply their approach to the technologically advanced strategic environment of today. A key argument of this more radical view is that if nuclear disarmament is to advance then democratic and popular movements need to become capable of influencing or controlling state institutions so that illegitimate power structures supporting and reproducing nuclear weapons can be dismantled.

Contributions to the literature

In order to address the gaps in the literature identified above this study has sought to cast a wide net to unearth and question the different political assumptions and positions of those engaged in nuclear weapons issues, to create an approach which draws on legal and technical knowledge and integrates idealist and realist visions of disarmament. In conducting the research for this study, both through studying official and non-governmental publications and interviewing high profile academics, campaigners and officials it became clear that it was necessary to create such a debate and conceptual synthesis for several reasons. Firstly, because as noted above, those currently working on these issues—including some of the most knowledgeable and committed practitioners—tend not to be familiar or engage with arguments from sources outside their professional and social circle.

Secondly, whilst, following the end of the Cold War and then the arrival in office of Barack Obama as US President in 2009, there was a proliferation of studies presenting action plans for NPS to eliminate nuclear arsenals, including lengthy reports by the Canberra Commission (1996), the Middle Powers Initiative (Green, 1999), the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (Evans & Kawaguchi, 2009) and Global Zero (2010)—to name but a few—there was a conspicuous lack of hard analysis concerning the political meaning of NWS disarmament. Despite the many valuable insights regarding the necessary steps and processes involved in disarmament, there was a tendency for these works to significantly underappreciate the transformative nature of abolition for domestic, regional and international power structures with the sources and scale of the requisite political movements for reform sidelined or ignored. The problem for works that become overly technocratic in their approach is that they end up, in Lawrence Freedman's (2009: 143-144) words, as 'geopolitical engineering enterprises' disengaged from the social movements necessary for progressive change.

Moreover, whilst the Stimson Center's *Unblocking the Road to Zero* (2009) project provided accessible and detailed political analyses of the NPS and nuclear capable nations, the perspective of citizens and the more transformative vision of the disarmament movement was again absent. The national analyses were also presented separately rather than being brought together to consider the structural implications of nuclear weapons for international order. This thesis therefore brings together a range of data concerning public attitudes to nuclear weapons and

abolition as well as economic and foreign policy to fashion a more democratic way of thinking about disarmament. Ultimately, this necessitates a second meaning for the nuclear revolution to be proposed, which focuses on the domestic political causes and consequences of states acquiring and developing the bomb. The corollary of this proposition is that nuclear disarmament requires a theory of domestic political change, based on the need for popular and democratic control of state institutions as a prerequisite of nuclear disarmament, an idea that I refer to as *institutional democratisation*.

Thirdly, this thesis aims to inform the wider political and international relations literature by emphasising the importance of nuclear matters to today's global political order. For example, a reconsideration of both the meaning of nuclear weapons and disarmament can enrich and shed new light on key debates, particularly concerning the nature of the modern state, conflict, measurements of democracy as well as interstate cooperation. The world is facing a series of interlocking and formidable challenges, including climate change, conflict, resource depletion, hunger, poverty and terrorism, so that new insights, such as this thesis aims to provide, concerning how to manage and ultimately dispense with the power of nuclear arsenals and develop a democratic, just and sustainable power transition towards a NFWF will have implications across subject areas and disciplines.

Fourthly, through investigating the domestic political drivers of nuclear possession and disarmament this study aims to contribute to theoretical debates concerning

how politics at the domestic level interacts with and determines states's international behaviour. Prominent critics of realist theory such as Phillip Gourevitch (1978) and Ethan B. Kapstein (1995), have highlighted the need for greater discussion and research in this area. Such authors argue that the limitations of realism, for example, concerning the agent-structure problem and its explanation of political change requires further study, to, in Kapstein's (Ibid: 754) words, 'articulate an explicit model of how a given set of domestic factors can produce particular international outcomes, the most important being war and peace'.

Thesis overview

The thesis consists of eight chapters spread over two parts—Part One comprises Chapters One and Two whilst Part Two comprises Chapters Three to Eight. Overall, the first two chapters are focused on providing an introduction to the main problems of nuclear disarmament, discussing both its meaning and significance and the different ways it has been conceptualised and situating the study within the literature on nuclear weapons and disarmament as well as political theory. This is done to enable the development of an appropriate methodology to examine the domestic *and* international politics of nuclear weapons concerning NWS. More specifically, the first chapter begins by investigating the meaning and implications of nuclear disarmament, surveying key works in order to consider how it and related terms have been used in theory and practice from a legal, political and technical viewpoint. In particular the importance of cooperation is highlighted, both in terms

of easing international tensions to create a suitable environment for disarmament and in terms of developing the monitoring and verification regime needed to support the phases of restraint and elimination on the path to zero.

This discussion lays the foundation for the definition or theory of nuclear disarmament that is carried throughout the thesis. Both technically—so that nuclear disarmament is conceived as a process with different levels of irreversibility requiring different levels of resource commitments, as a way of seeing political structures past and present—and as a means of identifying relevant sources and forms of data to help imagine the political conditions for and shape of alternative non-nuclear futures. This chapter makes clear that the findings produced by this thesis need, in particular, to be intelligible to supporters of the global nuclear disarmament movement so that it may inform their campaign strategies.

As noted above, there are powerful objections to the elimination of nuclear arsenals, for example, concerning the stability of regional and international relations following disarmament and the apparent security dilemmas that this would generate. These issues, it is argued, present formidable barriers to achieving disarmament and in particular a nuclear weapons free world. Given the weight and prominence of these arguments in mainstream thought it is appropriate for a study of this nature, which seeks to examine the politics of nuclear disarmament from a critical and normative perspective, to fully engage with such established literature to provide a rounded and nuanced investigation.

In order to address the arguments presented by works with a more traditional bent, Chapter Two discusses existing approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament in realist thought and scholarly critiques of realism, with three main purposes in mind. The first is to assess the extent to which such works provide useful insights into the conditions and indicators of nuclear disarmament, which may be applied to the problem of how to eliminate nuclear weapons in and between NWS. The second is to address what several scholars see as the major issue of how international anarchy drives conflict and stifles cooperation between states. According to this perspective, because nuclear disarmament requires significant international cooperation, the substantial obstacles to this posed by anarchy—such as fear and uncertainty—need to be addressed. The third is to, where necessary and useful, improve on existing approaches and positions by developing a new theoretical approach that can better explain and respond to the challenges of achieving nuclear disarmament in and between NWS.

Having identified the key gaps in and problems with the mainstream literature, I propose that in order to improve on it, we need to develop a new approach, which I term *institutional democratisation*. This approach, which is based on a normative stance supportive of nuclear disarmament, draws on insights from global governance and civil society literatures as well as social and political theory. *Institutional democratisation* can be summarised as the idea that, given the present condition of domestic and international politics, the democratic deficit in the five NWS—including crucially the United States given its singular influence, power and global reach—

needs to be addressed in order for there to be any prospect of the NWS embracing nuclear disarmament.

In order to elaborate on the previous discussion of the importance of *institutional democratisation* and the practicalities of abolition, Chapters Three to Seven of Part Two present a series of in-depth analyses of the nuclear weapons systems of each of the five NWS in order of their acquiring the bomb: US, Russia, UK, France, China. This is done through assessing the prospects for each NWS to transition to former nuclear weapon state (FNWS) status via an analytical approach informed by the work of a variety of scholars, including Beatrice Heuser (1998) Harald Muller (2009), Nick Ritchie (2012) and William Walker (2012). This approach includes an assessment of the economic, social, political and technological meanings, ideological underpinnings and institutions that make possible the production and deployment of nuclear weapons in order to understand both the significance and value assigned to the bomb by elites and the wider society, and how the elimination of nuclear arsenals may be accomplished.

Emphasis is placed on the concentration of nuclear weapons decision-making in each NWS in the hands of a very small number of military and political officials. Moreover, nuclear weapons systems have their own bureaucratic and technological momentum so that modernisation often occurs outside of political control. It is argued that the high secrecy surrounding the development and reproduction of these weapons along with the highly centralised decision-making structures regarding their use, is

incompatible with and highly corrosive to the spirit and functioning of democracy. With the possible exception of China, given its history of nuclear restraint and authoritarian political system, nuclear disarmament for each NWS will therefore likely require, and certainly benefit from, a domestic power transition involving citizens forming popular movements to gain control of state institutions that can manage, restrain and ultimately dismantle nuclear weapons systems. *Institutional democratisation*, as a driver of disarmament, will also benefit from other developments that reduce the salience of and reliance on nuclear weapons, such as awareness of these weapon's economic and social costs or technological advancements that may reduce these weapon's credibility and utility.

In terms of methodology, the analysis presented in Part Two was greatly enhanced by insights gathered from the wide range of interviews (30 in total) conducted with notable academics, campaigners and former or serving officials from each of the five NWS. Many of these interviews were conducted in New York during the 2014 NPT Preparatory Committee. Several interviewees wished to remain anonymous given their official positions so I have not included a full list of interviewees in this document. Gaining access to such experienced practitioners in the nuclear weapons field and integrating their insights into this thesis provided a wealth of primary data, supporting the development of an original contribution both to the nuclear weapons and the wider international relations and political literature.¹

¹ Such data gathering from amongst elite and prestigious communities was made possible by the collaborative studentship provided by the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) for

Chapter Eight of Part Two summarises the relationships and interactions between NWS outlined in Chapters Three to Seven, contextualising this in terms of the wider sphere of global nuclear order (including NAS and NNWS) and major socio-political trends, as well as discussing how *institutional democratisation* might be taken forward at a national level. This is done to integrate the insights and conclusions reached in the previous parts of this study in order to produce ideas on how NWS can transition to FNWS status, cooperate to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, and support the creation of a NFWF. This chapter addresses these questions by reviewing the primary obstacles to and opportunities for nuclear disarmament in and between NWS, as outlined in Chapters Three to Seven, before considering appropriate political responses (involving the state, civil society and the public, for example), how these responses may be developed to support the proposed disarmament measures and where the political will to realise these proposals may be found now and in future.

These processes concern the NWS's dual responsibilities to achieve the elimination of their own nuclear arsenals and to act in ways supportive of the creation of a NFWF. The ideas and proposals included in this section thus cover the domestic and

this thesis. This relationship enabled me to attend a series of high-level conferences on nuclear issues in Russia, the UK and US—as well as secretarial and research work for the BASIC Trident Commission—over the course of my research and allowed me to interact with and develop a stronger understanding of NWS nuclear policy-making communities and civil society groups. My involvement with BASIC builds on my previous campaign and research work with several UK-based NGOs focusing on peace and disarmament issues and has directly informed my current work on nuclear issues at Oxford Research Group.

international levels, with some consideration of how these levels interact. The discussion is also informed by the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability—which are essential for the creation of effective and legitimate processes and structures and if timely progress is to be made on eliminating nuclear weapons in and between NWS.

PART ONE

Understanding nuclear disarmament: theory and practice

Chapter One: Conceptualising nuclear disarmament

Introduction

How can we best start to understand the challenges NWS face in eliminating their nuclear arsenals? Specifically, how do we identify whom or what is responsible for the NWS's continued possession and modernisation of nuclear weapons and their refusal to disarm and how might this situation change? Having reached such understandings, what progressive ideas and action supportive of NWS being able to eliminate their nuclear arsenals should we recommend? Moreover, do such investigations require us to develop a theory of nuclear disarmament, and, if so, what would such a theory look like? In order to answer these and other related questions, it is perhaps best to begin by exploring existing theories of nuclear possession and disarmament, highlighting which areas remain problematic and which require further investigation and explanation. Following this discussion we might expect to be able to suggest the methods and knowledge necessary to create a more complete theory, incorporating these insights into our research design. Before embarking on this approach, however, there are several issues to take into consideration.

Firstly, we must recognise that because, in the field of nuclear weapons, definitions

of both the material and ideational can be hotly contested and are the subject of much political wrangling, we should critically examine how nuclear disarmament has been defined and consider whether it is necessary or sensible to settle on one particular definition. Secondly, existing scholarly theories of nuclear disarmament seek to answer either one or more of the following questions:

i) how and why did South Africa and the three former Soviet states (Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine) relinquish their nuclear arsenals?

ii) how and why were Iraq and Libya's nuclear weapons programmes dismantled?

iii) should, and if so, how could and why would the nine NPS relinquish their nuclear arsenals?

Studies of the first two questions attempt to explain things that have happened and are thus, naturally, based on empirical discussions of evidence. In contrast, studies addressing the third question attempt to explain how something that has not happened and is not happening (including nuclear disarmament by NWS) could take place, and thus deploy both an empirical and speculative approach.

Given that my study is of the latter type, it is necessary to consider what evidence I

should base the empirical part of my study on and how this evidence should be used to inform the speculative and transformative element of my study. For example, to what extent are studies of NPS nuclear possession, nuclear disarmament by former NAS, or states that had nuclear weapons programmes, useful to considerations of NWS disarmament and how useful are findings from other studies of nuclear weapons decision-making, such as non-proliferation and restraint, that focus on the experience of NNWS?

Thirdly, it should be acknowledged at the outset that this study has a pronounced normative element because I am not just trying to explain NWS decision-making past and present, but wish to contribute to a discussion of how NWS could act in future in order to become FNWS based on the threefold assumption that nuclear disarmament is desirable, justifiable and possible. It is thus necessary to consider what the methodological and theoretical implications are of this stance. For example, it is possible to make a heuristic suggestion at this point that my study will require a means of analysing NWS behaviour that can identify the forces enabling the production of nuclear weapons systems and that treats these processes as contingent, dynamic and open to substantial change even if present conditions make such change seem distant and unlikely. Indeed, this work will have failed if it cannot reasonably demonstrate that such change and the realisation of NWS disarmament is possible. Before beginning to review and assess existing theories of nuclear disarmament it is worth discussing each of these three issues in more depth, both to explore their significance and to try and reach some conclusions about the best way

to proceed through this complex terrain.

1.1 What is nuclear disarmament?

On the face of it answering the question ‘what is nuclear disarmament?’ seems straightforward. For example, we may refer to the consensus Final Document of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference (RevCon), agreed to by the 189 state parties to the treaty, which includes a series of ‘concrete steps for the total elimination of nuclear weapons’. Despite the clear language contained in this and other intergovernmental (such as United Nations) documents, nuclear disarmament remains a much-contested term, principally due to NWS and NNWS having quite different interpretations of what it—and the NPT itself—means, both from a political and technical point of view.²

For example, NWS have together argued that there is a need for a common language on disarmament, announcing in 2012 a ‘P5 Working Group on Glossary of Definitions for Key Nuclear Terms’. This group, chaired by China, submitted the glossary to the 2015 NPT Review Conference, in order to ‘promote mutual understanding and contribute to confidence building’ (PRC, 2013: 4; P5, 2015: 3). Yet representatives

² Furthermore, it is worth noting the difficulty that often arises in disentangling the political from the technical in this field given that preferences on either side can raise problems for the other to deal with.

from civil society point out that progress towards nuclear disarmament must be measured by the 13 Practical Steps agreed by NPT states parties at the 2000 RevCon for the 'systematic and progressive disarmament of the world's nuclear weapons'. The 2010 Final Document reaffirmed these 13 steps and included a 64-point action plan in order to move forward on achieving the treaty's goals, including a commitment by NWS to reduce the salience—meaning the role and significance—of nuclear weapons in their national security policy.³ Efforts by NWS to present their glossary as a 'tangible effort' towards achieving nuclear disarmament have thus been dismissed as totally inadequate by activists from civil society (Fihn, 2013: 5).

Importantly, Action 2 of the 2010 Final Document states that all members of the treaty 'commit to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their treaty obligations' (United Nations, 2010: 20). These three principles are designed to increase confidence between states and convince the international community that NWS have taken the legal, political and technical measures required for them to disarm. Nuclear disarmament here can thus be taken to mean a process leading to an end point, requiring universal participation, where there are no nuclear weapons in existence. The aforementioned NPT agreements can also be said to form the strongest existing basis for international discussions on nuclear disarmament. This is because of the number of participating states and the fact that NWS and NNWS reached consensus, lending the NPT process

³ This 64-point action plan contained three parts, corresponding to the three pillars of the NPT. In total there were 22 actions pertaining to nuclear disarmament, 24 on nuclear non-proliferation, and 18 on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as decisions concerning the Middle East.

significant legitimacy. Furthermore, in 1996 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) unanimously endorsed the legal obligation of all states, under Article VI of the NPT 'to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control' (Burroughs, 1998).

However, as the respected NGO Reaching Critical Will (RCW) points out, there are, in reality, several problems with the current approach. This is firstly because, they argue, the NPT agreements on nuclear disarmament are actually weak, providing 'very few benchmarks to measure progress'. Moreover, 'time lines were removed and the language used is vague and leaves most disputed actions open for interpretation' (Fihn, 2013: 4). Secondly, efforts to fulfill the requirements of the action plan have so far been 'significantly lacking' (Reaching Critical Will, 2014). Who or what is responsible for the current impasse? Beatrice Fihn of RCW (2013: 5) speaks for many NNWS when she argues that responsibility lies with the five 'official' NWS under the NPT: China, France, Russia, the UK and the US. For Fihn, the problem is that NWS 'somehow interpret' Article VI of the NPT as allowing them 'to possess nuclear weapons until they eventually decide to get rid of them'.

As observers such as William Potter (1994) have noted, the inequality inherent to the NPT was a result of the bipolar order imposed by the USSR and US at the time the treaty was agreed. The superpowers thus decided it was in their shared interest to preserve the status quo by preventing nuclear proliferation through technology

denial. Opposing this settlement were the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), a loose collective of developing nations from the southern hemisphere, and other progressively-minded NNWS, which actively pushed for the inclusion of nuclear disarmament obligations in the NPT.

Countries that interpret Article VI as an obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament are thus seen by NWS as ‘upsetting the strategic balance and even sometimes are blamed for not focusing enough on non-proliferation’ (Fihn, 2013: 5). As Mukhatzhanova and Potter (2011: 40) point out however, non-proliferation was ‘never a central tenet’ of the NAM, since its members wanted to preserve their right to access nuclear technology and focus on abolishing nuclear weapons, as symbols of discrimination and inequality (Muller et al, 1994: 5). Based on Fihn’s analysis, one may conclude that if progress towards the shared goal of nuclear disarmament is to occur, then the attitudes and behavior of NWS will need to significantly change in order to produce truly ‘concrete’ next steps, whether at NPT meetings or elsewhere, which must then be swiftly enacted.

In principle, each of the NWS supports the goal of a NFWF but each has different views on the path—for example, the form and content of multilateral negotiations required to achieve this—based on their political aims and objectives. One response by NWS to criticism from civil society and NNWS, has therefore been to meet as a group (known as the ‘P5’) to discuss the implementation of their NPT obligations. Four meetings have been held since 2009, covering subjects such as transparency,

mutual confidence building and disarmament verification. More widely, the NWS are each committed to the 'step by step' approach, which consists of negotiations on a series of initial steps towards nuclear disarmament, including further bilateral reductions in nuclear weapons stockpiles between the US and Russia, the agreement of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) and a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Whilst this approach is cast by its supporters as the most effective means of reducing nuclear dangers, critics argue that it has failed to bear fruit since the 1960s and is 'encountering serious difficulties' owing to its 'indefinite and contingent timeline' making it 'vulnerable to geopolitical tensions and disruptive events like wars and further proliferation' (Acheson, 2012; Burroughs, 2013: 13). In addition, independent analysts note how NWS have acted to render such agreements redundant. For example, Rebecca Johnson (2009: 231) observes that whilst the CTBT remains an important milestone on the road to disarmament, 'technological advances in computer modeling and hydrodynamic experiments' may have 'diminished' the treaty's 'significance for preventing the modernization of arsenals'.

Thus on the one hand NWS declare that they are earnestly engaged in discussions, behind closed doors, to create the political conditions that will allow them to realise their Article VI disarmament obligations. Yet, given the high salience nuclear weapons still have in security policies and the significant investments being made to modernise nuclear arsenals, it is clear that nuclear weapons remain 'deeply

embedded elements of their strategic calculus', as analysts from the Stockholm Institute Peace Research Institute (2014 ii) note, despite the potentially catastrophic risks of nuclear conflict and the continuing mistrust and tension between Russia and NATO. It is thus not surprising that observers such as Maria Looney (2013) have argued that 'there is still very little evidence of what has been achieved' by NWS meetings in the last four years.

Such contemporary disagreements are useful not only to highlight, if it was at all necessary, the controversial nature of nuclear disarmament but also to begin a discussion of how this study will approach such controversies, given that, as Robert Cox (2010) points out, 'there is no theory for itself; theory is always for someone, for some purpose.' The question of whom a theory of nuclear disarmament is for and what its purpose is may seem straightforward. Efforts to ban the bomb have, historically, consisted of popular struggles led by people of all nations, including—on a national level—NAM members and may be said to comprise, after Wittner (2009), the 'world nuclear disarmament movement'.

The historic purpose of, what I shall hereafter refer to as the *disarmament first* approach to the abolition debate, is the elimination of nuclear arsenals for principally moral reasons. Whilst abolitionists may disagree on several questions, for example, which strategy should be adopted to build momentum for nuclear disarmament and the organisation of domestic and international politics, they commonly argue that any use of nuclear weapons would result in indiscriminate

suffering and destruction of life on a huge scale—as experienced in the US bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 2012). Abolitionists also draw on a variety of other evidence, using humanitarian, legal, security, environmental and economic arguments as well as national and global public opinion in order to explain why nuclear disarmament is justifiable, realisable and necessary.

There are several areas of agreement within *disarmament first* regarding the purpose and requirements of nuclear disarmament. The first of these, as described above, is the moral and humanitarian justification for abolishing nuclear weapons as the necessary precursor to the establishment of common security amongst nations (ibid). Secondly, given their moral rejection of nuclear weapons, proponents of this approach advocate a range of unilateral and multilateral nuclear disarmament measures, placing the responsibility for such urgent action squarely on the shoulders of each NPS.⁴ Thirdly, nuclear disarmament is seen as a permanent end state. Today, campaigners from several groups and coalitions thus engage in activism to pressure governments to support a nuclear weapons convention or ban treaty for nuclear

⁴ William Walker (2012: 190) has summarised both what this would entail and the necessary prior processes, providing a useful representation of the general technical and legal approach of *disarmament first* advocates that is worth reproducing in full. As he describes it, nuclear disarmament would involve: the phased, verified reduction and dismantlement of nuclear arsenals, displacement of nuclear deterrence in the security policies of states, negotiation and entry into force of a global treaty banning all possession and usage of nuclear weapons, agreement on means of preventing future break-out, and conclusion—once and for all—that the existence of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the humanitarian impulse and with related bodies of law. The weapons would become illegitimate and illegal in all hands, for all time and in every place, and the edifices constructed around them would be dismantled, never to be reassembled. This outcome would be expressed in a universal, eternally binding Nuclear Weapons Convention.

weapons. In doing so they emphasise the importance of the 1996 judgment by the ICJ that international humanitarian law (IHL) does apply to the use of nuclear weapons and that their use would generally be contrary to IHL's principles and rules (ICJ, 1996).⁵

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (Fihn: 2016) therefore argues that the establishment of a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons, even without the participation of NWS, would 'allow nations in any part of the world to formalize their rejection of nuclear weapons and help create a clear international legal norm against the possession of nuclear weapons'. Such a norm, it is argued, would then build pressure on NWS to take progressive action on nuclear disarmament. Civil society groups such as ICAN have played a significant role in networking and strategising with NNWS, seeking to highlight the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation as a means both of building momentum towards a ban treaty and an alternative to what they see as the failed step-by-step approach (comprising negotiations on a limited number of initial steps towards nuclear disarmament) favoured by NWS (Datan et al, 2007: 22).

⁵ This means that any threat or use of nuclear weapons must not be targeted at civilians, must be capable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets, and must not cause unnecessary suffering to combatants, or harm greater than that unavoidable to achieve military objectives. Given these criteria, any use of nuclear weapons would involve war crimes and, moreover, crimes against humanity, because of the fact that the effects of nuclear weapons are uncontrollable (Committee on International Security and Arms Control, 1997: 87). Furthermore, the court unanimously endorsed a legal obligation on all states 'to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control' (Burroughs, 1998).

It is important to highlight the *disarmament first* approach at the outset of this study since a scholarly investigation of the political conditions necessary for NWS nuclear disarmament cannot ignore the history that preceded it and which it is a part of. Such a study should therefore aim to produce knowledge that will be of use and accessible to anyone interested in NWS nuclear disarmament and the realisation of a NFWF. Yet this issue is complicated by the fact that, in recent years, prominent figures from across the political spectrum in NWS have voiced support for the idea of a NFWF. Most notable is the apparent change of heart regarding nuclear weapons by several former statesmen and women (mainly representing British and US elites) who could be described as Cold Warriors, hawks or political realists.⁶ In particular, the phenomenon whereby figures from the US political establishment such as George Schulz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn—and many others—have come out in favour of ‘a world without nuclear weapons’ requires close critical examination (Nuclear Security Project, 2011). This is not least because the term ‘nuclear disarmament’ only appears once in the five op-eds they collectively wrote on the subject for the Wall Street Journal (Nuclear Security Project, 2014).⁷ The absence of this term, around which the aforementioned popular struggles have rallied for decades, is surely significant and requires further investigation.

Recent elite contributions to the debate regarding the possibility of a NFWF are

⁶ There have been a few French political and military figures joining this cause, such as Alain Juppe, Michel Rocard, Alain Richard, and Bernard Norlain (2009). However, the majority of the French political elite remains strongly devoted to retaining their nation’s independent nuclear arsenal.

⁷ The phrase appears in the first of the five op-eds, published in January 2007 as follows: ‘John F. Kennedy, seeking to peak the logjam on nuclear disarmament, said, “The world was not meant to be a prison in which man awaits his execution.”’

largely based on a recognition that nuclear weapons—once exclusively the weapons of the strong—have become potential weapons of the weak, thus threatening the great powers and changing international power dynamics. Indeed, David Cortright and Raimo Vaynen (2009) have observed that the proliferation of nuclear weapons ‘is both a cause and consequence of the growing decentralisation and multipolarity of international relations’. The ‘effectiveness of deterrence and the old bipolar international order centred on Russia and the United States’ is thus crumbling, so that where there was once stability there is now uncertainty.

Similarly, Alistair Young (2010: 3) points out that whilst the US has preponderant power ‘across the range of key power resources- military, economic and technological’, since the ‘latter part of the 2000s’ the distribution of power appears to be shifting, following the US’s disastrous occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the 2008 financial crisis and the ‘increased economic importance and greater assertiveness of China, Russia, India and Brazil’. Nuclear proliferation is also feared because it increases the risk that non-state actors will acquire nuclear weapons for terrorist purposes. Recent calls for action on nuclear disarmament from within the US and other NWS elites have therefore, in large part, been driven by the realisation that nuclear dangers must be reduced to prevent the possible use of nuclear weapons against their nations. Furthermore, in the 1990s, senior US political figures such as Paul H. Nitze (1999) went so far as to argue that the accuracy of modern conventional munitions should lead Washington to consider unilateral disarmament.

It is worth noting at this point that Russian and US governments have, since nuclear

weapons were first produced, discussed plans for abolition. These include the unsuccessful Acheson-Lillenthal report and the subsequent Baruch plan, proposed by the US, and the Soviet Gromyko plan—all from the beginning of the Cold War—and, more recently, as the Cold War was ending, the Reykjavik meetings between the United States and Soviet Union that led to massive reductions in both sides' nuclear arsenals. Raymond Garthoff (1994: 285) argues that Reykjavik can be seen as a 'spectacular missed opportunity' for the final realisation of nuclear disarmament. Similarly, former US General Lee Butler has described the period following the end of the Cold War as a 'priceless opportunity' for the US and Russia to deal with the problems posed by nuclear weapons but one which 'got stepped all over' (Schell, 1998: 207).

Clearly there is much one might learn from these historical episodes, both to avoid repeating past mistakes and better understand the present. For example, what are the differences between advocacy for nuclear disarmament stemming from grassroots social movements on the one hand and elite groups on the other? What are these group's respective strengths and weaknesses, how are they distributed across NWS and beyond and what have been their successes and failures regarding nuclear disarmament? Moreover, how can we characterise these groups past relationships and can and, if so how, might they work together to build political momentum for action on nuclear disarmament now and in the future?

Whilst recognising the importance of such questions, I will leave them to be addressed later in this study. This is principally because, however we view the past

and its successes and failures, we must first identify which contemporary problems require attention. The principal issue for this study being that whilst opportunities for nuclear disarmament remain open, momentum is currently in the opposite direction given the continual modernisation of nuclear weapons by all NWS. Recognising the urgency of this situation and the need to provide intellectual weight to the debate, several scholars, including George Perkovich and James M. Acton (2009) and David Cortright and Raimo Vayrynen (2009), have produced detailed works discussing the interlinking political conditions, legal instruments and technical requirements of nuclear disarmament and a NWFV.

To revisit Cox's point, it is pertinent to consider whom these and other theories are for. Are they, for example, addressing a technocratic, military or political elite or are efforts being taken to reach a global, public audience? In order to properly answer questions about the practical and political significance of such studies, it is necessary to provide some context and discuss the wider theoretical aspects of nuclear disarmament. To begin doing so I return now to the question 'what is nuclear disarmament?' simply because if we do not have a clear grasp of the term and its varied usage and meanings, it will not be possible to understand the changes in attitudes and behavior potentially required from decision-makers and institutions in NWS.

Getting rid of nuclear weapons: a review of terms and their function

In order to enrich our understanding of this issue it is necessary to look beyond the official documents of the NPT and United Nations and delve into the wide and varied literature concerning the enigma of nuclear disarmament. This literature serves either one or both of the following functions: i) to review the history of efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons from 1945 to the present ii) to speculate on possible future efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. Given this enquiry's focus on the five NWS and limits of time and space, this study will principally concentrate on comparing and contrasting works that primarily fulfill the latter function. As will become apparent, since the mid-2000s there has been a notable upsurge in such publications, the causes and consequences of which shall be considered. In any case, the history of nuclear disarmament will not be neglected as many of the recent analyses examine the historical record, so that this will form a significant part of our discussion.

It is worth noting at this stage that works with both historical and speculative functions may focus on one or more of the following interlinking aspects of nuclear disarmament: legal; political; technical. As previously discussed, the meaning of nuclear disarmament is contested in each of these three aspects. Indeed, we should acknowledge that the term nuclear disarmament is one of several, albeit the most common and widely known, used to refer to the eradication of nuclear weapons. Consideration of the different terms and definitions associated with this topic is particularly relevant to an effort to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons

because some type of shared understanding (whether at a national or international level) of what the *purpose* of nuclear disarmament is will be essential in order to create requisite norms, rules and institutions and utilise legitimate forms of counter-power. We therefore need to review both the historical and speculative literature with this consideration in mind.

Returning to the question of terminology, the terms used—with varying degrees of frequency—within the literature to describe the idea of eradicating nuclear weapons include:

- Denuclearisation: a term which is also used to refer to removing or banning nuclear weapons possessed by a state.
- Nuclear abolition: a widely used term which may be said to carry a particular ‘moral dimension’ (Tertrais, 2009 ii: 2), not least because of the connection to the abolition of slavery (Kelleher, 2011: 5).
- Nuclear elimination: a term used in the first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946.
- Nuclear zero: a term recently used by the *Global Zero* (2010) campaign’s disarmament action plan.
- Nuclear Weapons Free World (NWFW): an end state term widely used across the literature.

- Transarmament: a much less commonly used term referring to ‘an effort to obtain disarmament in offensive weapons through transarmament to defensive weapons’ (Galtung, 1984: 184).

Without going into a detailed comparison of how each of these terms has been used (often interchangeably, with the exception of transarmament) and their strengths and weaknesses relative to our discussion, we should appreciate the particular value of the term *nuclear disarmament*. This is especially necessary if we are to use it, as I do in this study, as the primary means of referring to the eradication of nuclear arsenals by NWS. Firstly, of the terms presented, nuclear disarmament is certainly one of—if not the—best known and mostly widely used, whether in public, non-governmental or governmental discourse. Secondly, nuclear disarmament has been used to refer to several different ‘levels of goals’ including: i) freezing ii) reducing iii) eliminating nuclear weapons iv) the end state of a NWFV, and thus provides a more comprehensive coverage of relevant processes (Galtung, 1984: 125).⁸

The first three of these goals can also be conducted amongst several different collections of states. For example, unilateral disarmament involves one state eliminating its nuclear weapons without seeking equivalent concessions from its actual or potential rivals. Beyond unilateral initiatives, disarmament negotiations

⁸ On the other hand, the term abolition carries the ring of finality to it, whereas disarmament is more ambiguous and has often been represented by NWS elites to mean reductions to nuclear arsenals, the glacial pace of which has long angered many. This is why, for example, campaigners in the 1990s, seeking a name for their new international coalition pushing for a global treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons, chose Abolition 2000 (Interview: AS).

resulting in participating states eliminating their nuclear arsenals could take place—separately or together—at a bilateral (involving two NWS/NAS/NPS), plurilateral (among more than two NWS and/or NAS/NPS) or multilateral level (involving several NWS/NAS/NPS/NNWS). These technical points are of considerable importance for my study given that I am investigating the particular contribution the five NWS could make to a NFWF by eliminating their nuclear weapons. In this sense nuclear disarmament, as a term, provides flexibility when discussing this topic as it can be contracted or expanded as required, for example, to include NAS and NNWS and the different phases of elimination, as will be necessary for the transition to a NFWF.

Processes and indicators of nuclear disarmament

It is appropriate to note here that Johann Galtung (1984: 125), discussing what a ‘general theory of disarmament’ would look like, considers that alongside *goals*, the other two key distinctions that need to be made are between disarmament *processes* and *indicators*. With regard to nuclear disarmament, each of these three areas need to be investigated from a legal, political and technical viewpoint, with the understanding that the limits and requirements of each will have important implications for the others. A Chatham House study published in 2000 entitled *Nuclear Weapons Policy at the Crossroads* argued that ‘little detailed analysis has been undertaken to determine precisely what a world without nuclear weapons would involve’ and that a ‘consensus’ on how a NFWF could be achieved was necessary if NWS were to move ‘below a minimal deterrent’ (Howlett et al, 2000: 47-

49). It is pleasing to note that since then a variety of studies, some of which are discussed below, have been produced that begin to develop the knowledge, including the technical understanding and legal instruments, required by nuclear disarmament.

What is principally lacking therefore, as has been widely recognised, is the political determination in and amongst NWS to drive the project of nuclear disarmament forward both domestically and through international cooperation (Perkovich & Acton, 2009; Cortright & Vayrynen, 2009). Whilst covering all three aspects of nuclear disarmament in this study, the contemporary political challenges of nuclear disarmament thus form its principal focus and begin to be explored in Chapter Two. Yet, in order not to neglect the importance of technical perspectives on this question and to be mindful of how expert practitioners have defined nuclear disarmament and the political implications of this, it is worth now briefly outlining some of the work that groups, including VERTIC—a leading verification and monitoring NGO—have done on this issue.

In their report *Irreversibility in Nuclear Disarmament- Practical Steps Against Nuclear Rearmament*, VERTIC researchers define nuclear disarmament as a state in which ‘the process of disarming has been fully completed and no nuclear weapons remain’ and consider how this state can be ‘locked-in’ (Cliff et al, 2011: 6). The early stages of disarmament will need to develop verification systems covering warheads, delivery

systems and fissile materials (Howlett et al, 2000: 52). There are potential scales of irreversibility here so that a considerably 'higher' level of disarmament would involve measures directed toward both a state's warhead stockpile and its supporting nuclear warhead production complex (Cliff et al, 2011: 16). Overall the question of irreversibility is important because, as Scott Sagan (2009: 166) argues, in a NWFV former possessor states would be 'more latent' than states which 'did not have their technological expertise or operational experience'. Owing to the fact that the five NWS will always be NWS according to the NPT it therefore makes sense to use Sagan's recommended designation of FNWS for NWS that in future fully realise the nuclear disarmament process. Secondly, rather than focusing on scrapping a particular weapons system, FNWS status—as an objective—conveys more appropriately the wider political implications for NWS if they are to live up to their international responsibilities and disarm irreversibly, verifiably and transparently.

Every level up the irreversibility scale makes rearmament more difficult, requiring more resources and time—equally, more money, time and equipment is required to attain a higher disarmament level. For Justin Alger and Trevor Findlay (2009: 3), there is a lack of precise information concerning the costs of disarmament—a 'void' which, they claim, needs to be filled to 'advance the discussion about nuclear disarmament beyond the philosophical to the practical'. Despite this gap, it is clear to them that such costs will be spread over several decades and be incurred at different points, so that 'dismantlement and disposition costs will come in the early stages, along with strengthening of nuclear safeguards, while verification costs will

ramp up as the process nears zero and becomes politically and strategically more sensitive’.

As Findlay (2003) points out, the verification and compliance regime for a NFWF ‘will need to be more effective than any disarmament arrangement hitherto envisaged’. This is necessary to cope with fears of breakout, which is when a state is suddenly revealed to have a previously hidden nuclear arsenal, produced new weapons or sufficient weapons-usable fissile material (highly enriched uranium or plutonium). The authors of the report *Unmaking the Bomb- A Fissile Material Approach to Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation* (Feiveson et al, 2014) argue that because a fissile material free world would make a NFWF more stable it is necessary for the international community to engage in a step-by-step process to:

cap, reduce, and eventually eliminate the global stockpile of about 1,900 tons of weapon-usable fissile material including material in weapons or recovered from dismantled weapons, the plutonium used in civilian nuclear power programs, and the HEU in military and civilian research and naval reactor fuel stockpiles.

Findlay (2003: 2) notes that while meeting the technical requirements for nuclear disarmament and a NFWF is a ‘tall order’, practical experience of disarmament and improving technologies mean that it is possible. Examples here include the

International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) verification of the dismantlement of South Africa's nuclear arsenal and technical collaboration on warhead dismantlement verification between the UK and Norway and between the UK and US—which considered the key question of how to balance 'information protection and information sufficiency' in an 'effective monitoring and verification regime' (UK Government, 2010 i; Feiveson et al, 2014; NNSA, 2015: 2). Findlay also argues that the 'good relationships' between states that will facilitate the negotiation of a nuclear disarmament treaty will also permit the construction of an appropriate verification and compliance system.

Elsewhere the Canberra Commission's report (1996: 10) on eliminating nuclear weapons argues that disarmament should be approached 'as a series of phased verified reductions that allow states to satisfy themselves, at each stage of the process, that further movement toward elimination can be made safely and securely'. Michael J. Mazarr (1997: 4) and other scholars, in a publication complementing the findings of the Canberra Commission report, propose that 'removing all nuclear weapons from operational status and placing them in a dismantled "virtual" condition' would be an important initial phase, prior to disarmament, in 'pushing nuclear weapons to the margins of world politics'.⁹

⁹ Mazarr (1997) outlines how NPS could transition to virtual nuclear arsenals to that 'no nuclear weapons were assembled and ready for use'. NWS could thus gradually:

dismantle all assembled nuclear devices and place the resulting parts—perhaps including warheads, delivery vehicles, and fissile material—under bilateral, multilateral, and/or international inspection. The weapons would be separated from the delivery systems in such a way that any attempt to marry the two would be verified.

Quantitative and qualitative reductions for NWS, covering the numbers *and* salience of their nuclear weapons are thus important to consider together, for example, in terms of considering how they can meet their NPT disarmament obligations.

Aspects of NWS's current nuclear policies which could be changed to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons (also potentially as moves towards a virtual nuclear arsenal as part of the transition to disarmament) concern: i) acquisition: meaning what kit is bought and owned—a particularly important issue when each NWS is pursuing nuclear modernisation ii) declaratory: public statements about the role of nuclear weapons iii) deployment: how nuclear weapons are arranged and positioned iv) employment: the circumstances and ways in which the government plans to use nuclear weapons to achieve strategic aims. An examination of how each of the five NWS might engage in such steps is presented in Chapters Three to Seven, suffice to say here that disarmament can thus also be seen as a learning process, involving far greater transparency regarding military capabilities and intentions, so that states gradually 'abandon secrecy', reduce uncertainty and continually improve their appreciation and knowledge of the legal and technical requirements of getting to zero (Schaper & Muller, 2008: 155).

What this brief foray into the technical aspects of nuclear disarmament shows us is that, given the implications of these decisions for national sovereignty, not least in

terms of how highly sensitive information should be handled, one or more political agreements, applicable to all states, will need to be reached on the appropriate scale of irreversibility and the accompanying transparency, verification and compliance regime in order for NWS to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Furthermore, if, as Findlay argues, amicable international relations are a necessary condition both of the process leading to disarmament and the maintenance of a NFWF, we should investigate the form these relationships might need to take. As I shall discuss in Chapter Two, several authors have addressed this question, some considering how co-operation and trust may be developed between NWS, whilst others emphasise the need for some form of political agreement, union or concert between the great powers, alongside disarmament action. In addition, NWS governments will need to be persuaded that the benefits of disarming outweigh the costs and ensure their citizenries are well informed about these matters.

1.2 Nuclear weapons decision-making: past, present and future

The purpose of the theory under consideration here is to contribute to an understanding of the challenges involved in the five NWS achieving nuclear disarmament. The question then is, how wide should we cast our net in order to develop such a theory? By this I mean, what data do we need and what case studies should be used? This is a methodological problem because the literature on nuclear weapons is vast, covering several decades and a wide range of actors. In order to

more easily navigate through the literature and identify what areas need to be covered and in what depth, we may split the literature into two sections.

Firstly, as identified above, there is a large selection of historical studies of nuclear weapons, which mainly consider what has happened. These theories can differ significantly in their methods and conclusions but share the good fortune of being able to build concepts from quantitative and qualitative data regarding the past and present behaviour, ideas and preferences of a range of actors. The four main categories within this first section includes theories of: i) nuclear possession: how and why NPS acquire, manage and use nuclear weapons as they do ii) nuclear restraint: how and why NNWS choose not to acquire nuclear weapons when they have the opportunity and incentive to do so iii) nuclear arms control: how and why NPS and NNWS place restrictions on the development, production, stockpiling, use and proliferation of nuclear weapons iv) nuclear disarmament: how and why former NAS and states with nuclear weapons programmes eliminated their nuclear weapons or were disarmed.¹⁰

Secondly, there is a much smaller selection of studies discussing the challenges of nuclear disarmament and/or a NFWF, including whether this is a desirable and realisable goal (Howlett et al, 2000; Perkovich & Acton, 2009; Cortright & Vayrynen, 2009; Stimson Centre, 2009). These tend to focus on particular NPS, pairings or

¹⁰ Nuclear proliferation includes both how and why nuclear weapons spread (horizontal) and new types are created (vertical).

groups of NPS or NPS as a whole, considering the problems posed by nuclear disarmament in the context of the wider international political environment. Such studies are based on empirical research but are, albeit to a different degree, unavoidably speculative. They are empirical because they tend to draw on evidence and theories both regarding nuclear possession and arms control directly involving NPS and nuclear possession, restraint, arms control and disarmament involving NNWS. They are speculative because they propose future courses of action by NPS, for example, behavior that is/is not conducive to nuclear disarmament.

Such conjecture concerning nuclear disarmament is problematic because, as Harald Muller (2009: 174) points out, the evolving interaction between several different actors over time cannot be reliably predicted: 'as conditions change, so do the structures of opportunity. New options, unthinkable at the beginning, become a serious possibility'. It is thus vital to develop ideas and proposals that are rooted in evidence and experience and which, as Muller suggests, are flexible and able to adjust to changing realities, in order to look 'far ahead' but not spoil the process by 'fixing strategies that should be subject to continuous adaptation because of changing circumstances' (Muller, 2009: 177).

In order to draw on the widest empirical base to inform justifiable speculation on the political conditions necessary for NWS nuclear disarmament and the means by which it may then be realised, this thesis would ideally review studies representing each of the four main categories in the first section in order to get a rounded sense of the

subject. However, because this study has certain limits of time and resources, it is also necessary to impose boundaries on such a review. I therefore use discussions concerning: i) nuclear possession by NAS ii) restraint iii) arms control iv) nuclear disarmament— such as how and why NAS have eliminated their nuclear weapons— as secondary material to highlight conceptual differences as and when necessary in order to principally focus in this study on works discussing NWS nuclear possession and development. The case for a consideration of the literature on Ukrainian and South African disarmament was perhaps the strongest. Ultimately however, I decided that the unique nature of these cases and the fact that NWS disarmament will be on a much greater scale limited the extent to which political conclusions can be drawn from these cases of relevance to NWS, so justifying their omission.

With regard to the second section of the nuclear weapons literature, concerning the contemporary challenges of nuclear disarmament and/or a NWFV, this is a question of selecting from an expanding, but still small collection of works, some of which are of much greater depth and significance than others. This section of the literature principally considers historical case studies in order to inform contemporary and future challenges associated with nuclear disarmament. Of these, as previously mentioned, two recent and seminal works are Perkovich and Acton's *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* and Cortright and Vayrynen's *Towards Nuclear Zero*. The former is also notable for including a wide-ranging selection of responses from eminent former or current academics, government officials, senior military personnel and other experts on the subject of nuclear weapons.

I begin my substantive discussion of both sections of the nuclear weapons literature in Chapter Two, primarily in order to begin assessing the explanatory power of existing theories of nuclear possession and disarmament. Before embarking on this task it is useful to provide a brief consideration of how the nuclear disarmament debate relates to a third and highly important section of the relevant literature—namely, political theory.

1.3 How does nuclear disarmament relate to political theory?

As discussed above, nuclear disarmament exists in many works as a practical issue that raises a number of political, legal and technical challenges requiring appropriate solutions. These works are produced by authors attached to different types of institutions—both governmental and non-governmental—including, in the latter area, campaign groups, research bodies and academia. Yet nuclear disarmament is also the subject of much controversy within another field, that of political theory. Discussions of political theory almost exclusively take place within academia, and generally debate nuclear issues in terms of how they relate to the dominant schools of thought in international relations (IR). For example, as we shall see in Chapter Two, nuclear issues are mainly discussed in relation to explanations of state behaviour at the international level based on the assumptions of realist theory.

Before outlining the meaning and significance of realist and other theory in Chapter

Two, it is necessary to outline why this study will discuss nuclear disarmament in relation to political and IR theory at all. The first reason is that it is important to review the theoretical literature in order to identify what claims and approaches already exist regarding the causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament and then assess the strengths and weaknesses of these different knowledge claims. This is also an important task given that there are strong criticisms of and objections to nuclear disarmament, on moral, political and practical grounds, within the theoretical literature. Given the social and political influence and weight of these objections, it is important for a study of this type—based on a normative interest in nuclear disarmament—to provide a coherent and well-evidenced critique of works that support nuclear possession and question the legitimacy of nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, engaging with ideas from across the political and theoretical spectrum should enable us to craft a more coherent and robust theory of NWS nuclear disarmament and, more widely, provide a contribution to political and IR theory by highlighting any gaps and problems within it.

In order to assess whether existing political and IR theories are able to explain the current disarmament impasse and propose effective action supportive of disarmament Chapter Two therefore conducts an in-depth discussion of realist thought and scholarly critiques of realism. Having identified the strengths and weaknesses of existing theory concerning the causes and consequences of nuclear possession and disarmament, I then propose alternative ways of analysing nuclear politics as a basis for pinpointing what political change is necessary if NWS nuclear

disarmament is to be realised.

Chapter Two: Assessing theories of nuclear possession and disarmament

Introduction

This chapter will discuss existing approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament in realist thought and scholarly critiques of realism with three main purposes in mind. The first is to assess the extent to which such works provide useful insights into the causes of nuclear possession as well as the conditions and indicators of nuclear disarmament, which may be applied to the problem of how to eliminate nuclear weapons in and between NWS. The second is to address what several scholars see as the major issue of how international anarchy drives conflict and stifles cooperation between states. According to this perspective, because nuclear disarmament requires significant international cooperation, the substantial obstacles to this posed by anarchy—such as fear and uncertainty—need to be addressed. The third is to, where necessary and useful, improve on existing approaches and positions by developing a new theoretical approach that can better explain and respond to the challenges of achieving NWS nuclear disarmament.

The former two areas will be addressed in the following way. Firstly, this chapter reviews key relevant works from the realist tradition and scholarly critiques of realism that elucidate what has been termed the 'nuclear revolution'. As Robert Jervis (1986: 690) explains, the nuclear revolution refers to the fact that no matter

how powerful a nation's military is, nuclear weapons are impossible to defend against. What is significant for Jervis about nuclear weapons is thus the concept of 'mutual kill' whereby 'the side that is "losing" by various measures of military capability can inflict unprecedented destruction on the side that is "winning" as easily as the "winner" can do this to the "loser."' Given the extreme and singular power of these weapons, the nuclear revolution thus means that 'brute force' has been replaced 'by coercion, or, as it is more frequently put, of defense by deterrence' (Ibid: 689). To properly review the meaning of the nuclear revolution for disarmament, a range of works on international relations will therefore be discussed, including, in non-chronological order: i) Offensive Realism in the work of John Mearsheimer ii) Defensive Realism in the work of Robert Jervis and Charles Glaser iii) Structural Realism in the work of Kenneth Waltz iv) Institutional theory and International Cooperation in the work of Robert Keohane and Nicholas Wheeler respectively v) World Government and Republican Security Theory in the work of Campbell Craig and Daniel Deudney respectively.

I discuss these approaches, which are placed together within a section where appropriate, by first reviewing their general approach to international relations, focusing on their understanding of how the anarchic international state system functions and relating this to the meaning of the nuclear revolution. For example, the former three realist groups in particular could be said to broadly fit within what Scott Sagan (1996: 57) terms the 'Security Model', which focuses on how 'international threats' to state's 'sovereignty and national security' drive decision-

makers to seek the bomb. For some authors—such as Mearsheimer and Waltz—the demands of anarchy thus naturally leads great powers to see nuclear possession as essential for their security and survival.¹¹ According to this logic, nuclear disarmament is undesirable and unrealisable, both because it threatens existing peace and stability and necessitates unachievable degrees of international cooperation.

Other authors that shall be reviewed, such as Craig and Deudney, observe that the nuclear revolution poses a deep challenge to the traditional tenets of realist thought because NWS rely on nuclear weapons for security yet these weapons threaten the existence of these and all other states given the extreme dangers they pose. According to this position, the nuclear revolution therefore requires international relations theory to move beyond realism and accept that nation states need to be transcended by some form of global political organisation. However, critics have replied that the idea of replacing global anarchy with global hierarchy is unacceptable because this threatens to introduce tyranny, so that some other solution must be sought. The work of Robert Keohane and Nicholas Wheeler is relevant here as they propose that states may avoid the conflict so prevalent under anarchy through adopting cooperative measures. Keohane focuses on the development of international institutions as a way of motivating states to work together to solve common challenges, including those with a ‘military-security’

¹¹ I take the term great powers to mainly refer to China, Russia and the US but also France and the UK as part of the five NWS.

dimension, whilst Wheeler examines how states may develop trust, to facilitate—amongst other things—progress on nuclear abolition.

In addition to focusing on the international state system, I pay particular attention to how each author under discussion treats the US, including in relation to nuclear issues. This is necessary given the US's singular power, the fact that all of the main authors reviewed are US-based academics and because each devotes significant space in their analysis to the US's strategic behaviour. I then review how each of these authors have viewed the project of nuclear disarmament, for example, whether they see it as a desirable and realistic enterprise, the political and security problems they see it posing and any ideas or proposals they discuss which could be supportive of it. In addition, at appropriate points in the analysis, I draw on the thought of other key international relations thinkers, such as John Herz and Thomas Schelling, to explore particularly relevant ideas and debates.

Having reviewed these different approaches to the nuclear revolution, I identify several significant problems in the thinking of the constituent authors on nuclear and security issues, including disarmament. Some of these problems, which are more common and more pronounced than others for each author, include:

- The adoption of a nationalistic approach that prioritises US security interests above all others, leading to support for continued nuclear possession by the

US in some shape or form.

- A normative bias in favour of nuclear possession that precludes a substantive consideration of the need for and benefits of nuclear disarmament, including a failure to properly consider the substantive legal, moral and security arguments for disarmament and the popular support for disarmament action.
- The absence of a political analysis that considers the domestic impact of the nuclear revolution, and which relates domestic politics to state's international behaviour on nuclear issues.

Such absences and deficiencies raise several analytical gaps that need to be filled in order to develop a compelling theory of nuclear disarmament, including:

- The need for detailed empirical data concerning nuclear possession in and between the NWS to support an analysis of why these states persist in their possession of the bomb that addresses domestic political dynamics.
- The need to identify a corresponding theory of change for nuclear disarmament that is legitimate and based on principles of democracy, transparency and accountability and that also specifies the actors and processes that will be able to realise such change.
- The need for an objective approach to the politics of nuclear possession and disarmament e.g. with an outlook based on justice and universalism that can appropriately differentiate between each NWS's responsibility for nuclear disarmament.

Having identified the key gaps in and problems with the mainstream literature, I propose that in order to improve on it, we need to develop a new approach, which I term *institutional democratisation*. This approach, which is based on a normative stance supportive of nuclear disarmament, builds on insights from global governance and civil society literatures as well as social and political theory, including Scott Sagan's domestic politics model, which focuses on the domestic drivers of nuclear acquisition. *Institutional democratisation* can be summarised as the idea that the democratic deficit in the five NWS—including crucially the United States given its singular influence, power and global reach—needs to be addressed in order for there to be any prospect of NWS nuclear disarmament. This approach is necessary because nuclear weapons systems can be seen as a shared scientific and technological culture amongst nuclear elites in the global north, with highly centralised decision-making structures for nuclear threats and detonation. The secrecy surrounding the policies guiding these systems is thus incompatible with and deeply corrosive to the spirit and functioning of democracy. Nuclear disarmament therefore requires, to varying degrees, popular social movements to democratise the state in each NWS. This could mean different things in practice according to the domestic circumstances of each NWS, but centres around the need to democratically reform or take control of state institutions so that defence and foreign policy generally and nuclear weapons decision-making in particular is guided by the will of the people. Questions, such as whether democratisation would automatically lead to disarmament, will also be important to consider here as will the types of civil society and other popular activism that would best support disarmament. For example, how does the recent rise of populist movements in France, the UK and US relate to nuclear issues and do

such political formations take an interest in nuclear issues, whether for or against the bomb?

Having developed the theoretical position of *institutional democratisation* in this chapter, in Part Two I identify the strengths and weaknesses of this theory's ability to explain nuclear politics by conducting a historical investigation of nuclear possession and disarmament in and between the NWS. As well as providing some means of testing *institutional democratisation* as a theory, evidence and ideas are gathered on the necessary indicators and conditions for nuclear disarmament. This process also identifies and responds to the different political setups of each NWS so that each of their unique nuclear and political histories and regimes are taken into account when developing recommendations and conclusions.

It is also important to state at the outset that in carrying out this investigation, I directly engage with the methodological problem of how to judge whether a theory may perform better than another given the speculative nature of nuclear disarmament—as something that has not happened and is not happening. When it comes to the conditions and indicators of nuclear disarmament, the main problem we therefore have is that our ideas and proposals are unavoidably incomplete and speculative. Any demand that existing positions relating to the question of nuclear disarmament be analysed and then alternative models or theories be developed as rival positions to show how one performs better than the other, may thus be useful, but only to a limited extent, for the reasons outlined above.

2.1 Approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament

Offensive realism: John Mearsheimer

John Mearsheimer (2001: 43; 2006: 114) described his self-confessedly 'pessimistic' approach to politics in an interview with *International Relations*, stating that 'I am an offensive realist who believes that war is a legitimate instrument of statecraft and that states should maximize their relative power.' Mearsheimer (2001: 80-81) developed his 'descriptive' and 'prescriptive' theory of offensive realism in his major work, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. In this work, it is argued that international conflict has been so prevalent because great powers are power maximisers, each sharing 'hegemony as their final goal'. This, for Mearsheimer (Ibid: 144) is how he believes such states not only mostly do but also should act in order to survive and thrive. Status quo powers thus only exist when a hegemon 'wants to maintain its dominating position over potential rivals' (Ibid: 47). He explains this power competition by outlining five 'bedrock assumptions' about the international system (Ibid: 148-153). Firstly, as with other structural realists, Mearsheimer sees this system as 'anarchic', which stems from the lack of a 'central organizing power'. Secondly, 'great powers inherently possess some offensive military capability'. Thirdly, 'states can never be certain about other states' intentions.' Fourthly, 'survival is the primary goal of great powers'. Fifthly, 'great powers are rational actors.' The result, according to the author, is 'three general patterns of behavior', namely 'fear, self-help, and power maximization' (Ibid).

In addition, Mearsheimer (Ibid: 168) follows John Herz (1951) in arguing that international anarchy creates the 'security dilemma', which 'reflects the basic logic of offensive realism' and whose essence is that 'the measures a state takes to increase its own security usually decrease the security of other states' so that 'ceaseless security competition ensues'. Inspired by Herz's work, Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler (2008: 1-9) have written at length on the security dilemma, describing it as the widely shared sense of uncertainty regarding the motives and intentions of states that acts as the prevailing existential condition in international relations. States are thus presented with a two level strategic predicament: i) the dilemma of interpretation i.e. the unresolvable uncertainty regarding the motives and intentions of states ii) the dilemma of response. This situation is driven by a combination of material and psychological phenomena—primarily the 'ambiguous symbolism' of weapons and the psychological dynamic known as the 'other minds' problem. As a result a security paradox can develop, whereby actors who only sought to ensure their own security '*provoke through their words or actions an increase in mutual tension, resulting in less security all round*'. Despite their potentially catastrophic risks, nuclear weapons are thus often justified by NWS as being their ultimate insurance policy in an uncertain world.

As we shall see in our discussion below, different authors assign different levels of importance to the concept of the security dilemma and what states can do to manage its impact. For example, Mearsheimer argues that little can be done to ameliorate the security dilemma, primarily because of state's inability to overcome

the problems of anarchy and eliminate uncertainty, in addition to the fear that relative gains can be achieved by states cheating on their commitments. The author thus acknowledges that he is applying a Hobbesian analysis, based around 'the absence of central authority' to the international state system (Mearsheimer, 2001: 1515). This raises a number of questions with relevance to the challenges posed by nuclear disarmament. For example, how and why have deep and complex civil societies evolved domestically to prevent civil war whilst global civil society is much less able to constrain power and prevent conflict? Moreover, would it be possible to create a central authority at the international level that could support the elimination of nuclear arsenals and maintain disarmament and/or a NWFV, and, if so, what would the causes and consequences of this be?

We shall address these questions below, suffice to note for now that Mearsheimer (2006 i: 118-123) sees bipolarity and nuclear weapons as having provided peace and stability during the Cold War, following which the US has, at times, acted as a 'pacifier' and 'offshore balancer' in Europe. Importantly, Mearsheimer (2001: 1224) notes that the internal dynamics and thus stability of anarchy aren't fixed, but vary according to changes in the balance of power, including the presence of nuclear weapons, and the number of great powers. At the same time as noting the importance of these factors, he admits that the central problem he and other theorists working in this field face is that it is not possible to definitively prove the relative influence of the balance of power and nuclear weapons in influencing developments in international relations, including what John Lewis Gaddis (1986)

referred to as the 'long peace' between the major powers during the Cold War (Mearsheimer, 2001: 1302). Moreover, he makes the wider point that insufficient time has passed for analysts to determine whose theory is right and whose wrong regarding the stabilising effects of the nuclear revolution (Ibid).

In addition to advancing his own offensive realist worldview, Mearsheimer critiques what he sees as rival positions and ideas, such as defensive realism and neoliberal institutionalism. For example, he claims that he developed his approach in response to the defects of defensive realism, which he argues is a 'good normative theory' but 'not a good descriptive theory', disagreeing in particular with Kenneth Waltz's view that states 'should not maximize their power' (Mearsheimer, 2006 i: 111). As for neoliberal institutionalism, regarding the likelihood of reconciling the great powers, Mearsheimer (2001: 229; 2006 ii: 233) argues that whilst 'adversaries can cooperate, and that adversarial relationships can be transformed into friendly ones' cooperation is 'sometimes difficult to achieve and always difficult to sustain'. This is because cooperation is inhibited by 'considerations about relative gains and concern about cheating' (Mearsheimer: 2001: 229). Moreover, great powers are unable to commit to the 'pursuit of a peaceful world order' because 'states are unlikely to agree on a general formula for bolstering peace' and 'policymakers are unable to agree on how to create a stable world' (Ibid: 224-224). Indeed, as well shall see, such pessimism regarding the prevalence of competition and the difficulty of cooperation plays a central role in much of mainstream realism's general concerns about—and objections to—nuclear disarmament.

Turning to Mearsheimer's (1990; 2001: 866) views on the nuclear revolution, he claims that the existence of nuclear weapons ensures global peace, with Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) making for a 'highly stable' world, helping to 'alleviate the vexed problem of miscalculation by leaving little doubt about the relative power of states.' Other benefits of nuclear possession highlighted in his work include these weapons' ability to make states more cautious in their behavior and 'dampen nationalism' by shifting 'the basis of military power away from mass armies and toward smaller, high-technology organizations' (Mearsheimer, 1990). Whilst Mearsheimer (2001: 1332) thus argues that 'there is no question that nuclear weapons significantly reduce the likelihood of great-power war' he also admits that 'war between nuclear-armed great powers is still a serious possibility.' Despite this, and as we shall see with other authors who are either supportive of or ambivalent about the nuclear revolution, Mearsheimer values nuclear weapons so highly because he sees them as uniquely valuable in maintaining the necessary conditions for human survival. Given this belief, it is hardly surprising that he is strongly sceptical about the possibility or desirability of nuclear disarmament, noting that 'there is little evidence that world disarmament is in sight', so that he does not think it fit to explore the conditions and indicators of disarmament in any depth (Ibid: 1316).

As well as being a pessimist, one of the other principle reasons for Mearsheimer's nuclear enthusiasm and disdain for disarmament is that he is a convinced nationalist. Mearsheimer (2006 ii: 237) has boldly promoted this stance, noting in one interview

that,

speaking as an American, there would be only one state with nuclear weapons in an ideal world – the United States. Thus, if I could easily take away every other state's nuclear weapons and nip the Iranian and Iraqi nuclear programmes in the bud I would do so without hesitation.

He has also argued that the US has and should aspire to nuclear superiority as this will 'likely' make it more secure (Mearsheimer, 2001: 567). Yet, according to his wider understanding of the conditions for international peace and stability, the US should remain an 'offshore balancer, not the world's sheriff', and thus a regional rather than global hegemon, because balanced multipolarity—as an international system—is much more conducive to the avoidance of war (Ibid: 1424). Given that many—in particular, defensive realists—believe that a proper understanding of the nuclear revolution should mean ruling out the pursuit of nuclear primacy owing to the dangers of pre-emption this would raise, Mearsheimer's apparent advocacy of it for the US is particularly controversial and poses real problems for the prescriptive part of his analysis. At the same time, he also appears to agree with defensive realists when stating that nuclear weapons are 'more useful for self-defense than for aggression', whilst again not ruling out their use in an aggressive capacity (Mearsheimer, 1990).

Further evidence for the reasoning behind Mearsheimer's (Ibid) opposition to disarmament can be seen in such statements as 'a nuclear-free Europe has the distinction of being the most dangerous among the envisionable post-Cold War orders', with the danger here being that 'the Soviet Union and a unified Germany would likely be the most powerful states in a nuclear-free Europe.' Mearsheimer (Ibid) thus advocates the 'carefully managed proliferation of nuclear weapons in Europe,' also noting that he is not as 'sanguine' about the spread of nuclear weapons as Kenneth Waltz. Moreover, soon after the end of the Cold War he argued for Germany to alone acquire the bomb alongside the US maintaining its continental presence as the 'pacifier' that 'maintains order' and thus 'peace' (Mearsheimer, 1990; 2006: 121). It is clear here then that the continuation of a US-led security order, and attempts to pursue goals beyond state survival are, for this author, acceptable so long as they focus on preventing the emergence of 'a potential hegemon in Asia or Europe' that could rival the US and don't upset the balance of power (Mearsheimer, 2015: 35).

Mearsheimer's focus on the prudent maximisation of US power, may be contrasted with the more universalist viewpoint proposed by scholars such as Herz (1966: 331-335). For example, Herz argued for a response to the nuclear revolution that moved on from 'particular national interest' towards an approach based on a 'universalist...world-embracing feeling of responsibility'. Thus, whilst he strongly believed that the security dilemma 'has never before asserted itself more poignantly' than in the 'bipolar and nuclear world' of the Cold War', he equally strongly believed

that a 'realist liberal', "universalist" solution of world problems' was the alternative to power politics and 'literally a matter of life or death' (Ibid; Herz, 1959: v). Yet Herz also asserted that as long as 'effective nuclear disarmament'—which would 'ultimately' be necessary—was not achieved, nuclear deterrence (with a general no first use policy) must be relied on 'to prevent a nuclear holocaust' (Herz, 1966: 197, 339). Whilst we may disagree with elements of this last point, we may note that a normative approach based on such 'moral-political universalism' is surely more conducive to an investigation of the indicators and conditions of NWS nuclear disarmament than one based on Mearsheimer's narrow nationalism (Ibid: 335).

Notably, the focus on the international state system in Mearsheimer's (2001: 103) work is such that there is an absence of substantial domestic analysis, which he puts down to the superior importance of structural factors on state's decision-making calculus. Secondly, he is dismissive of the value of basing policy in this area on the popular will, because 'public opinion on national-security issues is notoriously fickle and responsive to manipulation by elites as well as to changes in the international environment' (Ibid). Yet, as with some of the other authors we will discuss below, Mearsheimer does recognise both how domestic politics can affect state's international behavior and the impact of nuclear possession on domestic political processes. Exhibiting a keenness for consistency in his argumentation, he notes that the problem of nuclear possession harming democratic politics would not disappear in a NFWF if conventional weapons were relied on for deterrence because a substantial security establishment would still be required (Hardin & Mearsheimer,

1985: 422). This observation is useful in that it highlights again for us the fact that nuclear disarmament poses challenges relating to liberty and democracy that need to be dealt with concurrently at the domestic and international levels.

Additionally, whilst Mearsheimer (2001: 1334, 1479) credits democratic peace theory, which, he observes, is based on the argument that 'democracies are more peaceful than non-democracies, regardless of the regime type of their adversary' as posing 'among the strongest' challenges to realism, he argues that 'it has serious problems that ultimately make it unconvincing'. This is, for him, both because the theory is poorly evidenced and that 'stronger evidence exists for the claim that the pacific effects of democracy are limited to relations between democratic states' (ibid). Moreover, he argues that even if an authoritarian and illiberal great power moved in a democratic direction, this would not ensure a pacifistic, 'status quo' attitude to international relations because the demands of the anarchic international system, which determines all states behaviour, no matter the regime type, would remain in place (ibid: 1335). Several scholars have also added to the critique of democratic peace theory by pointing to evidence from the nuclear age suggesting that authoritarian great powers do not go to war with one another (Peceny et al 2002; Rosato 2003).¹² Overall then, an approach to disarmament drawing on democratic ideas and ideals, as this study aims to do, would benefit both from

¹² Although China and the Soviet Union engaged in a border conflict in 1969 which officials on both sides feared could escalate to the nuclear level (Burr, 2001).

explaining how it relates to theories of authoritarian and democratic peace and by responding to the claim that progressive internal political changes will be superseded by the external pressures of anarchy in determining the character of a state's international behaviour.

2.2 Approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament

Defensive Realism: Charles Glaser and Robert Jervis

An alternative to the pessimism of offensive realism has been developed by authors such as Charles Glaser and Robert Jervis, and is often termed defensive realism. This approach agrees that anarchy is the primary characteristic of the international state system and a highly significant—though, importantly, not the sole—driver of great power behaviour in that arena. Defensive realism thus gives much more analytical space than offensive realism to the role domestic politics plays in state decision-making. In addition, whilst this approach accepts that anarchy encourages conflictual behaviour, it also emphasises that it prevents states from achieving goals that are in their 'common interest' (Jervis, 1978: 167). For Jervis (1998: 986), the difference between the two realisms is thus that whilst offensive realists 'see aggression and expansionism as omnipresent' or 'believe that security requires expansion', defensive realists believe that,

much of international politics is a Prisoners' Dilemma or a more complex

security dilemma. The desire to gain mixes with the need for protection; much of statecraft consists of structuring situations so that states can maximize their common interests.

The key point Jervis (1978: 187), as a defensive realist, identifies here in relation to the security dilemma is that it may pertain in some but not all situations and can vary in intensity, being more or less 'vicious', depending on the circumstances. For him, where the security dilemma does operate, a 'Spiral Model' can result, whereby interactions between security-seeking states fuels competition and conflict (Jervis, 1976: 62). For Glaser (1997: 189) meanwhile, defensive realism has identified variables that cause the 'variation in countries' behaviour'. In *The Security Dilemma Revisited*, he draws on Jervis's work to explain 'how the magnitude and nature of the security dilemma' depends on 'two variables', namely 'the offense-defense balance and offense-defense differentiation' (Ibid: 171). Importantly, a world where it is possible to differentiate 'between offensive and defensive systems' allows, for Jervis (1978: 214), 'a way out of the security dilemma.' Yet in the past, as he also notes, difficulties distinguishing between offensive and defensive weapons have meant that arms control treaties 'have been rare', something that is also partly due to states 'not always' being 'willing to guarantee the security of others' (Ibid: 201).

In addition, Glaser (1997: 174, 189), who prefers the label 'contingent realist' for his ideas, given that the availability of security for states depends on 'empirical assessments of the offense-defense balance', notes that information sharing is

important to help distinguish between 'greedy states' i.e. those with 'motives beyond security' and 'security seekers'. According to this analysis, 'the magnitude of the security dilemma' is influenced by the 'extent of the adversary's greed...and of the adversary's unit-level knowledge of the state's motives'. Glaser (Ibid: 192) develops this point by proposing that in cases where 'democracies are believed not to have greedy motives' a democracy engaged in a 'military buildup' won't be seen to be as threatening as an authoritarian state acting in the same way. The result for him is thus that, 'the democracy faces a less severe security dilemma; and interactions between democracies could result in a democratic peace instead of intense competition' (Ibid: 193). Moreover, to the extent that states can depend on reliable information sources, Glaser claims it is possible for them to 'reduce uncertainty' and 'mitigate the security dilemma', enabling a move to policies that are more cooperative (Ibid: 192).

The idea of defence-offence differentiation also informs Jervis's (1979: 618) argument that the nuclear revolution 'sapped' the driving force of the security dilemma—and was thus of major historical importance—by making defence central and overcoming the supremacy of offence. More precisely, Jervis (Ibid: 198) sees the advent of nuclear weapons as marking a shift from 'defense to deterrence', in the context of which, 'offensive weapons are those that provide defense'. The expansionist ambitions of greedy great powers therefore became impossible given the dangers of MAD. For him, the 'high cost of war', which nuclear weapons help ensure, have thus today contributed to the creation of a security community 'among

the leading states' i.e. the US, Western Europe and Japan (Jervis, 2009: 201).

Moreover, Jervis (1978: 198, 206) claims that nuclear strategy cannot work, as despite the fact that 'at best' nuclear possession 'will keep the nuclear peace' it will 'not prevent and, indeed, may even facilitate- the use of lower levels of violence' so that 'military victory is impossible'. According to this logic, MAD may therefore weaken the security dilemma at the level of nuclear weaponry, but not necessarily at the level of conventional weaponry, depending on the policies pursued. Jervis (1986: 695) goes on to claim that 'if we date the Soviet acquisition of second-strike capability in the mid-1960s, it is noteworthy that the age of mutual assured destruction has seen no serious crises'. The most obvious objection (of which there are several) to the assertion that the Cold War was so tranquil is the Cuban Missile Crisis, which several prominent authors and statespeople now accept was the moment of greatest peril for human civilization (Perry, 2015: 5).

Despite the comments outlined above, Jervis (1986: 702) has also stated that he is 'deeply ambivalent' about the costs and benefits of the nuclear revolution. He therefore notes that it has brought both 'great security and insecurity', because 'on the one hand, mutual second-strike capability means that a major war is extremely unlikely; on the other hand, it means that if such a conflict should erupt, it is likely to destroy our civilization.' This raises the question of what policies will prevent such a conflict erupting? In response, Jervis (1978: 214) outlines several scenarios, one of which 'in the nuclear era' is where the superpowers rely on invulnerable Submarine

Launched Ballistic Missiles, Anti-Submarine Weapon technology is 'not up to its task' and 'limited nuclear options' are 'not taken seriously.'

Yet despite such scenarios promising stability and peace, nuclear conflict remains possible, with the 'basic question' of whether the nuclear revolution enhances security or not remaining 'unanswered, if not unanswerable'—a sentiment we've previously encountered in Mearsheimer's work—so that, for Jervis (1986: 702), 'it is not surprising that so many arguments rage'. To complicate matters further, and as we shall see later in this chapter, when seeking to address Jervis's conundrum we need to consider additional consequences of the nuclear revolution, including on the domestic front, that authors such as Campbell Craig and Daniel Deudney have begun to highlight.

Moving on to the question of nuclear disarmament, as with John Herz writing in the 1950s, Jervis writing in the 1980s could not see the development of the political conditions supportive of nuclear disarmament in the near future. The priority for the latter during the Cold War was thus a restrained security approach to ensure results that were mutually acceptable for the great powers (Jervis, 1989: 257).¹³ Moreover, in terms of precisely why meaningful disarmament processes are gridlocked, Jervis (1986: 695) makes the important observation that 'to the extent that America's

¹³ Similarly, Herz (1966: 244) wanted a 'holding operation' to be put in place to ensure stability and avoid nuclear armageddon.

major interest is in preserving the status quo, nuclear weapons have brought the United States a real, although nonmilitary, victory'. Owing to the fact that the US has security concerns beyond its national territory—which, according to Glaser's definition, would make it a 'greedy' state—'American resolve and will' come to be seen as 'primary' (Ibid: 701). The consequence of this for arms control agreements, according to Jervis, is that they have been treated by some in the US as 'bad...not because they produce a less favorable military balance than would otherwise result, but because they produce psychological demobilization and disarmament' (Ibid).

These points complement Mearsheimer's nationalistic agenda by suggesting that the 'status quo' and the nuclear revolution supports Pax Americana. This logically means both that nuclear disarmament would jeopardise such a 'victory' and explains why those that support US state power and believe its security requirements include regional and/or global hegemony oppose nuclear abolition.¹⁴ The claim that the 'peace and stability' of the Cold War, which offensive realism contends was principally ensured by MAD and bipolarity alone, is thus challenged by defensive realism, which emphasises the diplomatic cooperation built between the Soviet Union and the US, alongside other factors such as 'the increased pain of war' following World War 2 (Jervis, 1989: 25).

¹⁴ At the same time, as noted in Chapter One, there are a number of senior former military and government officials who both support US power projection and the goal of nuclear abolition.

Whilst pessimistic regarding the prospects of nuclear disarmament, defensive realism is more optimistic than offensive realism when it comes to international cooperation, promoting the idea that uncertainty can be overcome if the incentives and motivations of states and their leaders are understood. The possibility of sharing information in this way, it is argued, allows decision-makers to move beyond escalating threats (as per deterrence) and arms races in order to focus on compromises, reassurances and rewards. Furthermore, statespersons are encouraged to use diplomatic and political tools in order to develop transparency and empathy and signal their intentions. As discussed above, for Glaser, regime type matters here since democracies are more likely than authoritarian states to be seen as security seekers, thus weakening the security dilemma. Ultimately this all means that with the right approach and circumstances, mutual restraint can be achieved as a means of preventing conflict and, particularly in the current age, nuclear war.

Returning to the perspective defensive realism takes on these issues, as well as highlighting divergent views within realism, Jervis has sought to explain the differences between realists and neoliberal institutionalists. In doing so, he proposes that the two school's 'disagreement over conflict is not about its extent but about whether it is unnecessary, given states' goals' (Jervis, 1999: 42). Neoliberalism thus 'does not see more cooperation than does realism; rather, neoliberalism believes that there is much more unrealized or potential cooperation than does realism', which can 'at least in part' be explained by the fact that 'they study different worlds' (Ibid: 45). Drawing on what he sees as the analytical strengths of neoliberalism,

Jervis (Ibid: 61) thus notes that,

perhaps the most important path by which institutions can change preferences is through domestic politics. Drawing on liberalism, neoliberalism holds that states are not all alike and that preferences in part arise internally. To the extent that this is correct, international arrangements can alter the power, beliefs, and goals of groups in society in ways that will affect foreign relations.

Whilst Jervis (Ibid: 45) here accepts the neoliberal focus on how international institutions affect a state's internal politics and thus their foreign policy, he does not himself analyse the workings of domestic regimes, though he does note that other scholars have explored how 'the shape of domestic institutions affects both the chance of international agreement and the distribution of the benefits'.

As with the 'different worlds' which realism and neoliberalism study, the domestic political sphere may thus be seen as *another world* which defensive realism is aware of but does not study in any significant depth. The implications of this will be seen with our subsequent discussion of nuclear possession and disarmament, given that theory in this area needs to be constructed from an analysis of both domestic and international sources of state behaviour. For example, we need to better understand how a state's relative strategic power and regime type affects its international

goals—and ability to achieve them—in relation to nuclear issues.

In addition to defensive realism's interest in the neoliberal emphasis on institutions, Jervis and Glaser are very sympathetic to democratic peace theory. Jervis (1994: 872) explains his enthusiasm by arguing that democracies with strong institutions are 'very likely to remain at peace with each other and to cooperate more readily than is true for autocracies or revolutionary regimes.' Elsewhere, the same author notes that,

if arms are positively valued because of pressures from a military-industrial complex, it will be especially hard for status-quo powers to cooperate. By contrast, the security dilemma will not operate as strongly when pressing domestic concerns increase the opportunity costs of armaments (Jervis, 1974: 178).

This is a rare case of Jervis outlining a domestic variable, i.e. whereby a military-industrial complex or other political 'concern' exerts an enabling or restraining influence over a state's defence and foreign policy, thus making it a source of international conflict or cooperation. In this case, the author identifies the state as a 'status quo power', which, based on his other comments, would probably make it a democracy. If we accept this analysis, it is logical to extend it and propose that there may be lower or higher levels of democratic practices and processes within a state

and that these may influence and correspond with the type of behaviour, for example cooperative or non-cooperative, a state engages in on an international level. Moreover, it seems reasonable to suggest that identifying the domestic political actors that enable or restrain action supportive of nuclear disarmament may both reveal to us important sources of a state's international behaviour as well as helping us understand the internal political changes that may be required in order for a state to become a greater champion of disarmament.

Turning now to the specific question of how defensive realism approaches nuclear disarmament, Glaser has done a significant amount of work imagining what this might entail, including its political and military requirements. Notably, as with other US-based realists we have encountered, his starting point for opposing the 'flawed case for nuclear disarmament' is whether this initiative will 'enhance' US security (Glaser, 1998: 112). Similarly, Michael E. O'Hanlon (2010: 83) has argued that nuclear disarmament efforts should only be endorsed if they are focused on meeting 'the security of the United States and its many friends and allies around the world'. Moreover, upsetting 'American-led great power stability' with 'the wrong approach' to nuclear disarmament, O'Hanlon argues, could lead to regional proliferation amongst US allies should the 'American deterrent seem to weaken' (Ibid: 72). He therefore argues for a 'middle-ground position', whereby 'the right time horizon for seriously pushing a new nuclear accord is after the world's half dozen or so key territorial and existential issues involving major powers are resolved' (Ibid: 86).

As for Glaser (2007: 222), the other key question for him concerns in what world nuclear war would be more likely, to which he concludes that 'disarmament would not reduce the probability of nuclear war, so it would not provide what is commonly understood to be its key benefit.' Overall, whilst like Jervis, Glaser (1990: 11, 181-183) is sceptical regarding the benefits of the nuclear revolution given the risks involved, his reading of the literature on cooperation under anarchy leads him to conclude that the prospects for disarmament are 'extremely poor' and that there are also a 'variety of imposing domestic political barriers' that need to be overcome, not least for the US. Moreover, he argues that there are significant dangers in shifting from what he sees as the current stability in the international state system—where the security dilemma is strongly mitigated by the war preventing effects of MAD and responsible arms control is in place, facilitating reductions towards small nuclear forces. Overall, Glaser and O'Hanlon may therefore be said to represent a school of thought where security—particularly, in their case, for the US—must come before disarmament, which fits in what may be termed a *security first* approach to eliminating nuclear weapons.

According to this view, arms control measures may also, if further developed, make nuclear disarmament possible, if not very likely. Glaser (1998: 117) thus critiques the notion that we should move to—what he claims would be—an unpredictable and potentially very volatile disarmed world that would 'reinforce' a spiral down in relations, where the possibility of accidental or deliberate nuclear use would persist, the potential for proliferation would become 'far more threatening' than today and

where 'states' security would be very sensitive to cheating.' Glaser (2007: 222) also makes the point that if international relations sufficiently improve to make nuclear disarmament possible it will not then, in any case, be necessary and might even be counter-productive by reducing 'the prospects for preserving such near-perfect major power relations'.

Leading arms control theorist Thomas Schelling has made several similar points, beginning with the argument that nuclear (and other) weapons cannot be disinvented. The main question he poses is, 'why should we expect a world without nuclear weapons to be safer than one with (some) nuclear weapons?' (Schelling, 2009: 125). For him, a NFWF cannot be one in which the great powers see 'every crisis' as a 'nuclear crisis' so that 'any war could become a nuclear war' (Ibid: 127). Such a scenario would cause 'responsible governments' to race to build the bomb, after which states could respond in several different ways, including using nuclear strikes to disarm their opponents to prevent them from achieving strategic dominance (Ibid: 126). Elsewhere, Schelling (1962: 401) discusses other problems associated with 'total disarmament', arguing that 'some form of world government' would be required to 'police the world and ensure against war and rearmament'. The 'monopoly' of military power in such a centralised world authority would then have to find a way to 'improve' and 'stabilise' deterrence so that there is a 'balance of prudence', whereby states see maintaining a NFWF as preferable to rearmament (Ibid: 406).

Jervis complements Glaser's and Schelling's view of disarmament, asking what will replace nuclear weapons in terms of deterrence? For Jervis, the important thing about nuclear weapons is the 'political effects' that they produce, 'not the physics and chemistry of the explosion' so that analysts therefore need to 'determine what these effects are, how they are produced, and whether modern conventional weapons would replicate them' (Jervis: 1988: 83). Where Glaser's analysis differs from Schelling's, in particular, comes in the former's focus on the importance of domestic political barriers to nuclear disarmament. Glaser (1997: 183)—in a way similar to Jervis and, for that matter, Herz,¹⁵ thus discusses the role of the military-industrial complex and other 'powerful interest groups' in promoting conflict, yet does this without going into much detail about these groups and how they function—an important gap in his thinking and the defensive realist project generally.

Moreover, Glaser (1998: 119) notes that if nuclear disarmament is ever going to make progress then a detailed plan is required because a NFWF would involve a 'permanent revolution' in international relations—as the mirror image to the immense impact of the nuclear revolution itself. Echoing Schelling, Glaser (2007: 219) points out that such a plan would need to deal with the problem of

¹⁵ For example, Herz (1966; 210) notes how 'nuclear facts affect domestic affairs' and 'in turn, domestic affairs, so affected react on the nuclear world situation'. He then moves on to discuss the importance of elite attitudes to nuclear issues, noting that if nuclear possession leads to the 'concentration of power in a few leaders within nations', then how these leaders perceive nuclear issues and respond to them 'may be vital for nuclear strategies, foreign policies, and international relations in general'.

rearmament given 'the coercive potential' of a state gaining a lead 'in a rearmament race' so that 'states would have to coordinate their potential for nuclear rearmament, including their nuclear energy facilities'. This observation again highlights how several authors from the defensive realist tradition see global nuclear disarmament as encompassing a range of issues beyond the disposal of the weapons themselves. The role of domestic political groups in pushing for the reproduction of the bomb, the potential need for world government, the recreation of deterrence in a NFWF to ensure peace and stability, and the international management of atomic power are thus all concerns that defensive realism argues need to be engaged with or resolved if great power nuclear disarmament is to have any chance of being realised.

2.3 Approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament

Structural Realism: Kenneth Waltz

As with the other realist authors discussed above, Kenneth Waltz's theoretical approach to international relations (generally referred to as neorealism or structural realism) centres on the contention that state behaviour is driven by the demands of the anarchic international political system, which he says is 'politics in the absence of government' (Waltz, 2010: 89). As we have seen, in this system, which is one of 'self-help', structural realism posits that a state's main priority is 'to maintain their position in the system' whereas offensive realism underscores the draw of power

maximisation, arguing that 'the international system provides great powers with good reasons to act offensively to gain power' (Waltz, 1979: 126, 2008: 42; Mearsheimer, 2001: 111).

For Waltz, the system has a structure that was formed by 'like units' i.e. states, acting together so that it is 'individualist in origin, spontaneously generated and unintended' (Waltz, 2010: 91). Importantly, the system operates in such a way that 'structures and units interact and affect each other' (Ibid: 100).¹⁶ Whilst states within the system are the same in terms of being 'autonomous political units' (Ibid: 95) and perform similar functions, they are also 'differently placed by their power' (Ibid: 97) so that 'great powers' have an increased ability to perform similar actions. For example, following the nuclear revolution, 'states relate to one another differently, yet each state still has to take care of itself as best it can', with nuclear possessors, so Waltz (2008: 41) claims, using their weapons 'in the service of peace' via deterrence.

For Randall Schweller (1996: 90-93), 'insecurity'—in Waltz's thinking—is therefore driven not by 'greedy actors but by the inescapable self-help nature of the system', so that states seek maximum security rather than maximum power, as proposed by offensive realism. This, for Schweller (Ibid), as well as Glaser and Jervis, is an error

¹⁶ Waltz (1986: 44) also notes that 'any theory of international politics requires also a theory of domestic politics, since states affect the system's structure even as it affects them'.

which must be corrected by bringing 'the revisionist state'—meaning those which have nonsecurity, expansionist goals—'back in' so that 'differences in state goals' are studied alongside 'anarchy and the distribution of capabilities'. Waltz (1986: 91) does note that states have 'endlessly varied' goals beyond survival, and does differentiate between states according to national power, for example, by discussing at length the US's dominance in his work and how its behavior affects the threat perceptions of other states. However, as with other US-based analysts of a realist persuasion that we have encountered, Waltz (2000: 23, 28) is keen to present the US as a 'benign' manager of the international state system, and as a 'liberal dominant power'. As we shall see, Waltz's 'status quo bias', where he fails to distinguish between 'greedy' and 'security-seeking states'—as Glaser does—helps him to sustain the belief that when it comes to the spread of nuclear weapons 'more may be better' and nuclear disarmament is neither desirable or realisable.

For Waltz (2010: 161-163), the character and nature of anarchy varies according to the number of great powers in the system—and thus whether the system is unipolar, bipolar or multipolar. As with Mearsheimer, Waltz (1993) believes that bipolar relations are the most stable of the three alternative systems so that over the course of the Cold War 'the longest peace yet known rested on two pillars: bipolarity and nuclear weapons.' After the Cold War, the world moved away from bipolarity to unipolarity as the US became the world's only superpower. Now, however, Washington's power is being challenged and multipolarity is 'developing before our eyes'. For Waltz (2000: 28, 38), this is entirely natural given how the 'balance of

power' operates, so that 'some states try to increase their own strength' or 'ally with others to bring the international distribution of power into balance' in an effort to ensure their autonomy and survival.

In terms of Waltz's response to neoliberal institutionalism, as with offensive realism, (2010: 196) anarchy is perceived as making 'collective action for the common good hard to achieve'. This is because of problems such as multilateral coordination and free riding. Moreover, if great power cooperation is to be viable, the US needs to lead the way given that 'international institutions are created by the more powerful states, and the institutions survive in their original form as long as they serve the major interests of their creators, or are thought to do so' (Ibid: 210). Waltz (2000: 18-20) also argues that neoliberal institutionalist proposals that states try to ameliorate or escape the security dilemma by practicing costly signaling and participating in institutions, remain dependent on underlying power relations, which will always provoke fear and uncertainty amongst states, thus dampening cooperative efforts.

As for democratic peace theory's potential contribution to world peace, Waltz raises several concerns. For example, according to him, proponents of this theory argue that only 'democracies of the right sort' can bolster the cause of peace, yet 'democratic states, like others, have interests and experience conflicts' (Waltz: 1993: 77). A state may thus try to become a democracy and live in peace, but so long as the international environment remains the same i.e. anarchic, this won't count for

much in terms of the state's international behavior, because 'external behavior...bears little relation to state's internal political composition' (Waltz, 2008: xii). Democracies may therefore exist in peace with one another, but even if 'all states became democratic, the structure of international politics would remain anarchic' meaning that the threat of war would remain (Waltz, 2000: 10).

Jervis (2014: 500) has responded to Waltz's arguments by positing that he ignores 'regime type' and 'narrow domestic interests and how they are aggregated through domestic institutions'. Jervis's argument here is that we need to consider how a state's internal politics and regime varies if we want to explain international behavior, which corresponds with Schweller's point about the need for a differential analysis of state's goals. Yet if we look more closely at Waltz's (2000: 13) work, we can see that in several places, he does note the important role domestic politics plays, stating that 'the causes of war lie not simply in states or in the state system; they are found in both'. The issue here, as with Mearsheimer, is which factor—agent or structure—plays a bigger role.

On the one hand, Waltz (2008: xii) notes that 'small internal changes' cannot compare to the importance of the 'international structure' so that 'external behaviours bear little relation to internal political composition'. Yet elsewhere he claims that a change in this order will require a 'major domestic power shift' and (as we saw with Glaser and Jervis) also identifies how 'internal military and political pressures' can drive arms races between nations (Waltz, 1990: 741). We may

conclude from such statements that Waltz believes that changes to international behavior and order within the current system is possible and, to some extent, driven by domestic developments whereas changes to the structure of the system itself is much more difficult. This aspect of Waltz's work is highlighted by Campbell Craig (2003: 169-170) who notes how 'Waltz conceded that unit-level phenomena affect international politics in three ways' i.e. i) ideas can have an impact on 'questions of great power war and peace' ii) national leaders can manage systemic stability iii) fear of nuclear war engenders caution by decision-makers. This discussion is important for the purposes of this study because of our need to identify drivers of the requisite changes to domestic and international politics, which may include a transition from anarchy to a different structure, supportive of nuclear disarmament action. In order to begin doing this and consider how Waltz's views on unit-level behaviour i.e. domestic factors and international structure relate to questions of nuclear disarmament, it is first necessary to review his justification for nuclear possession and his arguments in favour of the spread of nuclear weapons.

The arrival of nuclear weapons at the end of WW2 is presented by Waltz (2000: 5) as one the 'greatest...within-system changes' to take place 'in modern history, or perhaps in all of history'. The invention of the bomb was thus epoch-making but did not alter the anarchic structure of the international political system itself. Moreover, for Waltz, since structural forces lead to the logic of self-help and power politics, great powers value nuclear weapons because they secure their vital interests and uphold the international order. According to this view, nuclear deterrence thus

successfully 'kept the peace' between the superpowers during the Cold War by inducing 'great caution in international politics' (Lieber & Press, 2006: 42).

Waltz presents his defence of continued nuclear possession in terms that are, in several ways, similar to the arguments outlined above by Mearsheimer, Glaser and Jervis. Firstly, nuclear weapons are 'useful' for great powers in dealing with the security dilemma because they 'make the waging of war among them unlikely' (Waltz, 2010: 187). Secondly, nuclear weapons are low cost compared to large-scale conventional forces. Thirdly, they are only needed for deterrence—meaning a secure second-strike capability—because nuclear weapons 'are useless for fighting wars and even for threatening blackmail' (Waltz, 1997: 154). Fourthly, nuclear weapons are the 'only peacekeeping weapons the world has ever known', being 'inherently stable' given that they 'induce caution' in their possessors (Sagan and Waltz, 2013: 220-224).

Waltz has also embraced the gradual spread of a nuclear-armed crowd, celebrating nuclear weapons for lessening the 'intensity as well as the frequency of war among their possessors' (Sagan and Waltz, 2013: 36). Moreover, his argument for the spread of nuclear weapons considers why states targeted by the US—such as Iran and North Korea— might seek the bomb, stating that 'conventional defense and deterrence strategies have historically proven ineffective against the United States, so, logically, nuclear weapons are the only weapons capable of dissuading the United

States from working its will on other nations' (Sagan and Waltz, 2013: 221).¹⁷ Several scholars have critiqued Waltz's position on the spread of nuclear weapons. For example, T.V. Paul (2000: 8) posits that Waltz's arguments do not correspond with political reality, noting that the number of countries that acquired nuclear weapons after the original five 'is so small that these cases seem more like an anomaly than the norm'. Maria Rost Rublee (2009: 10) also concludes that 'neorealism' tends to 'overpredict proliferation' and does not convincingly explain why so few states have developed nuclear weapons.

With regard to the conditions and indicators of nuclear disarmament, whilst accepting the potential of arms control as a form of cooperation, Waltz has stated that 'it would be strange' for him to support the elimination of nuclear weapons 'as they have made wars all but impossible' and, in any case, 'it's impossible' to get rid of these weapons 'entirely' (Keck, 2012). According to structural realist logic in general, non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament or rollback may occur if a threat is removed or following the state receiving security guarantees from the US (Waltz, 1995: 13). Thus, despite Waltz (Ibid: 14), arguing that international efforts should 'concentrate more on making large arsenals safe' and less on preventing weaker states obtaining small nuclear forces, he also observes that 'we should be careful

¹⁷ Waltz (2012: 2) has even gone so far as to claim that a nuclear-armed Iran would be the result 'most likely to restore stability to the Middle East'. He justifies this position by stating that 'if the leaders of a country understand the implications of nuclear weapons, they will see that with them they can enjoy a secure peace at reasonable cost' (Waltz, 1993: 54).

about conveying military threats to weak states' given that leader's of these states 'fear' of losing power may drive them to seek the bomb (Ibid: 8).

Whilst being generally enthusiastic about the peacekeeping qualities of nuclear weapons, when properly managed, Waltz does admit (like other authors we have reviewed above) that their possession contributes to authoritarian government and secrecy at home (Sagan and Waltz, 2013: 10). However, his treatment of this topic is brief and not presented as a problem requiring a solution—presumably because he believes such issues are a side effect of what he describes as states 'taking care of their own security' (Ibid: 37). It also needs to be recognised that, rather than nuclear weapons providing a 'cheaper' strategy for NWS, as former US Defense Secretary William S. Perry (2015: 81) and British Vice Admiral Jeremy Blackham (2013) have noted, nuclear powers have sought strong—and thus very costly—conventional militaries to ensure the credibility of their nuclear arsenals, for example, in terms of escalatory threats moving from conventional to nuclear use. In this sense, when estimating the costs of nuclear possession we need to take into account both the expense of maintaining sufficiently powerful military establishments and their domestic implications for liberty and democracy.

Elsewhere, Waltz engaged in a high-profile debate with Scott Sagan concerning the desirability of horizontal proliferation. Sagan (2013: 77) countered Waltz's claim that more nuclear weapons states 'may be better' by arguing that such moves would be potentially destabilising, given the problems of command and control and the risks

of 'deterrence failures and accidental use'. Whilst Sagan argues that nuclear zero is the 'best option', Waltz (1997: 160) countered that the recent 'vogue of abolition' is driven by experts in the US who are concerned that nuclear proliferation to 'the weak' will 'limit what the strong can do to them'. Furthermore, as with Glaser, Waltz (1993: 73) is concerned about the stability of a disarmed world, arguing that with the disappearance of bipolarity, it is necessary to 'compare the problems of balancing in conventional and nuclear worlds'. Waltz therefore argues that nuclear disarmament would raise the likelihood of conventional war, particularly given both the issue of miscalculation—which, he claims, is much higher in a conventional than a nuclear world—and the US's predilection for global dominance, so that the problems of war and how to balance rival military forces need to be solved before abolition can be contemplated.

In addition, Waltz argues that even if a nuclear ban could be agreed, it 'would be impossible to police and enforce' given the ease with which states could cheat on their commitments and become involved in a rearmament race (Sagan and Waltz, 2013: 223). Moreover, he posits that, 'controlling and moving toward the elimination of nuclear weapons' would require 'nothing short of an unimaginably competent and despotic international regime', a scenario equating to a 'world tyranny' which, he argues, no one would want (Waltz, 2012: 9). Disarmament is thus finally—in Waltz's eyes—a clash between national sovereignty and international priorities, with the former, for the foreseeable future, always winning out.

2.4 Approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament

Cooperation under anarchy: Robert Keohane and Nicholas Wheeler

In contrast to the pessimism of those whose acceptance of realist ideas leads them to emphasise the prevalence of competition and conflict in international relations, a number of scholars take a more optimistic view. For example, Robert Keohane (1988: 6) contends that, contrary to realism, conflict between states is not inevitable and that states can, 'when complementary interests exist', construct international institutions to alleviate security dilemmas and enable long-term cooperation to the benefit of all. As Keohane (1984: 26) explains, this approach may thus be distinguished from Waltz's structural realism 'by its emphasis on the effects of international institutions and practices on state behavior'.

Keohane also describes how his work on cooperation and the design of institutions is 'infused' with normative intent in order to solve 'the most pressing practical problems'—including the need for humanity to avoid a nuclear conflagration. Reviewing the meaning of realism, he therefore asserts that it,

sometimes seems to imply, pessimistically, that order can be created only by hegemony. If the latter conclusion were correct...at some time in the foreseeable future, global nuclear war would ensue...No serious thinker could, therefore, be satisfied with Realism (Keohane, 1983: 532).

His 'liberal institutionalist' theory sees international co-operation as requiring that 'the actions of separate individuals or organizations which are not in pre-existent harmony- be brought into conformity with one another through a process of policy coordination' (Keohane, 1984: 51). According to this approach, rather than international order being an inevitable result of power struggles, it may be deliberately—and more productively—shaped by states that are able to realise their potential to cooperate.

Whilst Keohane does not directly discuss the types of interstate relations conducive to disarmament, his argument that cooperation under anarchy is possible and necessary in the absence of world government supports the idea that states can together create an international environment that suits their mutual interests and which enables them to take disarmament action. Moreover, he explores problems related to nuclear issues when outlining the difficulties states face in constructing institutions in the 'military-security' arena. This area can be particularly challenging because of the 'high cost of punishing defections, the difficulties of monitoring behavior and the stringent demands for information that can be imposed when successful defection can dramatically shorten the shadow of the future' (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985: 236). The design of effective institutions therefore requires the systematic working out of 'how to get the incentives right in constructing institutions, and what scope global institutions should have' (Keohane, 2009: 10). As a result, regimes may be created with 'rules' that 'may provide opportunities for governments to bind their successors, as well as to make other governments'

policies more predictable' (Keohane, 2005: 13). The uncertainty prevalent in military-security cooperation might therefore be overcome if state's behaviour is altered to take into account the 'preferences of others' so that 'policy coordination' is achieved between them (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985: 226).

Other useful ideas regarding how problems of military-security cooperation under anarchy can be overcome may be found by engaging with the wider social and political science literature on this topic. For example, Robert Axelrod (2006: viii) has investigated how cooperation, involving action taken towards a shared and collective goal and to promote collective welfare, can develop 'amongst egoists without a central authority'. Axelrod (Ibid) uses the Prisoner's Dilemma game to argue that the strategy of 'tit for tat' or simple reciprocity, whereby an actor cooperates on the first move and then does whatever the other player did on the previous move, yields the highest payoffs over time.¹⁸ In addition, in a world populated by 'meanies', i.e. greedy actors that defect, cooperation can be initiated through more modest actors 'clustering' to protect 'alternative strategies' (Ibid: 63). Other suggestions Axelrod (Ibid: 126-141) provides regarding the cultivation of cooperation include: i) enlarging the shadow of the future to ensure durable and frequent contact ii) changing the payoffs for players iii) teaching the players values, facts and skills to promote cooperation. Moreover, when the creation of a 'central authority' is 'impossible or

¹⁸ Elsewhere, Lindsfold and Collins (1978), found that a strategy of Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction (GRIT) induced most cooperation. GRIT was created in the 1960s to achieve mutual nuclear arms reductions and was proposed as a means of easing tensions between the US and USSR during the Cold War.

too expensive' he argues that cooperation 'based on reciprocity' that is self-policing is the best option (Ibid: 174, 186).

Such strategies could be applied to arms control and disarmament negotiations as well as the reformation and construction of institutions to both ensure mutually beneficial outcomes and consider how the political environment suits different types of initiatives. Indeed, Axelrod and Keohane (1985: 250) point out that a key benefit of 'international regimes' is that they 'reinforce and institutionalize' reciprocity, making 'defection' less acceptable and more costly. Yet, as they also note, in a passage which has particular relevance for this study and its focus on *institutional democratisation*, 'arms control negotiations involve not merely bargaining between governments, but within societies as well' (Ibid: 241).

The result is that 'political institutions' follow the 'preferences' of domestic actors by design, yet such institutions can, Keohane argues, 'also have independent effects' because they 'create rules for decision making, help to structure agendas, and offer advantages to certain groups while disadvantaging others (Keohane and Milner, 1996: 4). Over time, strong institutions may even shape actors' policy preferences.' The overall point is that national and international institutions each contain 'constraints' which 'interact' in varying ways according to prevailing 'political-economic conditions' (Ibid: 6). Thus, 'international developments could affect the coalitions that form in domestic politics'—an observation which may be applied to the purposes of this study in several ways, by, for example, considering how such

developments may cause an NWS to move towards *institutional democratisation* and/or nuclear disarmament—or not (Ibid: 7).

Elsewhere a range of scholars, including George Perkovich and James Acton, David Cortright and Raimo Vayrynen, Harald Muller, William Walker and Nicholas Wheeler have investigated how nuclear disarmament may be advanced through states cooperating, an approach I shall hereafter term *cooperation with disarmament*. Whilst the work of these authors is recognisably distinct, it is sufficiently compatible to be grouped together in this way. The main area of agreement across these and other authors is that the US, Russia and China must engage in geostrategic cooperation as part of a political process in which they move gradually to diminish their reliance on nuclear weapons (Cortright & Vayrynen, 2009: 93; Walker, 2012: 163; Muller, 2009).

Of the recent works within the *cooperation with disarmament* category, Cortright and Vayrynen's *Towards Nuclear Zero* provides a detailed and thorough set of ideas and proposals. Of particular importance is their conclusion that nuclear disarmament must be understood fundamentally as a political process. This necessitates the resolution of conflict and the development of 'cooperative political and economic relations' to make NWS feel secure enough to disarm. For example, policies such as the 'institutionalisation of democracy, economic interdependence and participation in multilateral institutions' are proposed as 'steps in the direction of increasing the prospect and sustainability of disarmament' (Cortright & Vayrynen, 2009: 161). A

similar series of proposals can be found in Perkovich and Acton's *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons* (2009: 15), which begins by asking how the 'security conditions which would permit nuclear weapons to be safely prohibited be created, and how might measures to implement such a prohibition be verified and enforced?' Perkovich and Acton (2009: 23) state that nuclear abolition should be 'approached as a 'co-evolutionary' process of reciprocal step-by-step progress, in which nonproliferation and arms-reduction measures emerge from changed political and security environments and vice versa'.

Differences occur amongst authors advocating *cooperation with disarmament* when it comes to the emphasis placed on the process by which a balance of interests—rather than a balance of power between the major states—might be achieved. For example, Wheeler (2009) emphasises trust building between the great powers, whereas Perkovich and Acton focus on regional conflict resolution. Wheeler's approach thus goes some way to addressing the problems previously discussed in Chapter One regarding the technical requirements of nuclear disarmament. This is because he explores how the 'good relationships' Findlay identified as being vital for an effective verification and compliance regime in the creation and maintenance of a NWFV might be established. For example, Wheeler argues that governments must base their security on mutual trust rather than mutual fear—as exemplified by the possession of nuclear weapons. Contrary to the 'standard contention', Wheeler (2009: 3; 2010; 2011; 2012) argues that states can do this by using mutual co-operation and trust-building measures to move away from competitive or

individualistic conceptions of security towards more cooperative systems within the anarchic international system. States may thus, he posits, mitigate uncertainty and build initiatives supportive of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

A key point raised here is that, even if it were possible to reach zero in an atmosphere of fear and distrust, a non-nuclear world would be a far more dangerous place to live than our current one. This is because of the problem of ‘hedging’ whereby a state might secretly maintain or acquire the bomb, either out of fear that others were doing the same, or that they might do so in the future. Wheeler (2009: 5) therefore argues that global nuclear disarmament can lead to a more secure world, but on the critical condition that ‘each step on the road to ‘global zero’ is conceived as a process of trust-building’.

The connection between the problems associated with anarchy and nuclear disarmament identified in this approach stems from Wheeler’s previously mentioned work with Ken Booth (2008) on the security dilemma. In this book, whilst not directly critiquing nuclear possession or advocating nuclear disarmament, the authors argue that although future uncertainty is an inescapable problem for human society, it can be mitigated or possibly even transcended if states strengthen international norms of co-operation and trust. When states trust one another sufficiently they can develop security communities—characterised by high levels of integration and the delegitimisation of force—to live in peace and avoid war, the European Union (EU) being an example of a ‘mature security community’ (Ibid: 190).

In his work, Wheeler draws on Aaron M. Hoffman's (2002) definition of trust as an attitude involving a willingness to place the fate of one's interests under the control of others.¹⁹ In *Building Trust* Hoffman (2006), outlines how distrust may be overcome through protecting actors from the costs of opportunism by transforming the institutional environment in which they interact. Trusting relationships require strategies that guard rivals from one another at the international level and from opposition groups who object to trusting relations at the domestic level. Decision makers can be shielded against the fear of betrayal and opportunism through the provision of: i) 'effective voice' in group decisions, meaning reliable opportunities to participate in and influence collective choice over the long-term ii) 'breathing space', whereby counterparts help structure agreements in ways that protect leaders against their domestic political opponents. This also diminishes the prospect of leaders being removed from power, which could lead to a new regime that does not want to honour previous agreements.

In more recent work, Wheeler (2010; 2011) investigates how such insights may be applied to nuclear questions, organising two recent symposiums entitled 'Challenges to Trust-Building in Nuclear Worlds'. Presentations at these events explored different approaches to moving beyond stalemate in diplomatic negotiations in order to build constructive dialogue, including: utilising a 'trust wheel' which connects reason,

¹⁹ As previously noted, this willingness is based on a belief, for which there is some uncertainty, that potential trustees will avoid using their discretion to harm the interests of those trusting. Trust manifests itself in the form cooperation takes so that identifying trusting forms of cooperation requires indicators that are sensitive to its particular features.

reflexivity and routine as 'key elements in the process of suspension of uncertainty'; the development of shared symbolic mechanisms; perspective-taking to achieve empathy and discussions of strategic stability (Ibid). *Cooperation with disarmament*, including the proposals generated on this topic noted above, is thus of value and importance for this study given its focus on finding constructive means of overcoming obstacles to nuclear disarmament. At the same time, it is important to highlight and heed possible criticisms of and concerns with this approach, which I shall now summarise over several points. As I note below, these points are more applicable to some authors within *cooperation with disarmament* than others, both because this is not a uniform category and given the different emphases within these author's work.

Firstly, the importance of *cooperation with disarmament*, as presented by Wheeler is based on questionable assumptions about the 'quintessential' nature of the security dilemma in international relations (Booth and Wheeler, 2008: 1). The security dilemma—as deployed in this work—thus acts as a pre-determined, totalising lense with which to view the behaviour of states, including nuclear possessors. Yet, if one's aim is to construct the empirical foundations of a generalisable theory, it is reasonable to suggest that a better approach would be to begin by analysing the power dynamics and relations in and between nations on a case-by-case basis. One reason to do this is that, for those who find it to be a useful analytical tool—such as Glaser and Jervis—the security dilemma may operate at higher or lower levels of intensity, depending on the political-material circumstances. For example, these

authors argued that the nuclear revolution was of great importance because it has likely helped to dull the impact of the security dilemma.

The reliance on a totalising vision of the security dilemma is also puzzling given that in their work of the same name, Booth and Wheeler (2008: 9) recognise at least two other terms which may best summarise the dynamics of international conflict. These include the term 'strategic challenge' where 'the dilemma of interpretation has been settled' and 'one government identifies another state as a real threat,' as illustrated by Soviet leader's response to the Reagan administration in the early 1980s. Moreover, the Cold War in general is presented as being other than a security dilemma because '*there can be no dilemma in a situation of clashing ideological fundamentalisms*' (Ibid: 67). Notably, the authors also discuss how the originator of the term security dilemma—John Herz—'departed' from his previous position, so that he now considered the notion that the dilemma was 'the basis of all past and present conflict' to be 'an exaggeration' (Ibid: 31). Booth and Wheeler go on to claim that Herz made this move in response to the 'aggressive ambition' of Nazi Germany in World War Two.

Such strong questioning of and misgivings about what aspects of both World War Two and the Cold War were security dilemmas by the prime exponents of the theory themselves, should justifiably lead us to wonder what international conflicts can be more clearly shown to exhibit symptoms of the security dilemma. In answer to this, Booth and Wheeler (Ibid: 73-78) focus on cases such as the 'ethnic violence' in

Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Yet even here the security dilemma faces trouble because 'just as a great deal remains in dispute amongst historians, so there is no settled verdict amongst security dilemma theorists'. Furthermore, as the authors note, disputes exist between 'structural and unit-level interpretations ('emerging anarchy' versus 'elite manipulation', Hobbesian fear versus ethnic fundamentalism). Once again, we are therefore left to wonder precisely which cases the security dilemma can be unequivocally applied to so that it can explain significant examples of state behaviour before and during international conflict.

For the purposes of this study, we also need to consider if the term security dilemma usefully describes the geopolitical situation between NWS today. If not, then we need to both consider what other terms are most appropriate and what our answers mean for *cooperation with disarmament*. When answering these questions, to ensure the accuracy of the descriptive terminology we use, and decide whether the 'security dilemma' concept is useful or not, we can—as Booth and Wheeler (Ibid: 2) recognise—begin by attempting to differentiate between states according to their behaviour. For example, it may be useful to use Glaser's terms and identify them as greedy—and thus revisionist or revolutionary powers or security seeking—and thus status quo powers. To help make this judgment, we may retain the realist focus on military power as a guide to a state's defensive or offensive intentions and ability to realise its strategic goals. Furthermore, when collectively or individually categorising the international political environment, the position states occupy within it and their resulting behaviour, we may carefully study examples from the historical record.

With regards to the first point, it is fair to observe, as Booth and Wheeler (Ibid: 38) do, that we are faced with the problem of how to define contested terms associated with and involving 'security'. Herz (1951; 1966: 236-237) argued that a security dilemma is a situation in which both sides are 'striving to gain security from attack,' yet he found the meaning of 'security' to be 'elusive'. For example, he noted that whether states could be seeking security for their 'minimum' territorial needs or for wider 'national interests' including 'extreme economic and political "imperialism"'. If the latter, he observed that this may reflect the interests of groups that are not representative of, or beneficial for, the nation as a whole. Based on Herz's discussion of this question and in relation to the historical record, it is reasonable to suggest that when identifying what security means for a state—and thus what the security dilemma itself means—we may either take the definition provided by the state or states in question, or seek some other consensual and legitimate terminology, based, for example, on domestic and international public opinion, accepted behavioural norms and legal agreements.

In this regard, it is uncontroversial to suggest that the most obvious and important case to study today is the US, given that it is by far the world's leading military power. The US's actions in recent years—including power projection in key regions of strategic importance to Washington such as Europe, the Middle East and East Asia, with NATO expanding up to the borders of Russia and the US seeking to contain a rising China—underlines the importance of asking how we should characterise the collective and individual predicament these great powers have created and are

facing. In response, numerous critics of US foreign policy have, over several decades, variously described Washington as acting in a consistently aggressive, expansionist and imperialist manner (Beard, 1934; Bacevich, 2008; Chomsky, 2004 i; Falk, 2016; Kiernan, 2005; Kolko, 1969). Moreover, several recent global public opinion surveys have found that the US today is seen as ‘the greatest’ or a ‘major’ threat to peace worldwide (BBC, 2006; Gallup, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2017). Wheeler and Booth (2008: 70, 79) themselves are not totally unsympathetic to such critiques, but limit their description of the US as a state driven by ‘ideological fundamentalism’ to the period of the Cold War and ‘the second President Bush,’ when it shifted from being a ‘status quo power into a revolutionary one’.

Whether one subscribes to the former or latter position regarding the US’s behaviour, the question this debate again raises is whether the term security dilemma, for the purposes of this study, is the most appropriate and useful way of describing prevailing geopolitical interactions between the great powers. The discussion above suggests that sufficient evidence—including expert and global public opinion—exists to consider whether other terms, including strategic challenge, expansionism and imperialism, have a stronger explanatory power and legitimacy in relation to a geopolitical situation characterised by US military dominance. This being the case, alongside the fact that nuclear weapons are central aspects of the NWS’s strategic power, we should necessarily also question the explanatory power *cooperation with disarmament* has as a means of understanding the causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament in and between NWS as well

as continuing to seek additional and alternate explanations.

The second concern that needs to be raised about *cooperation with disarmament* is that it does not consider how nuclear disarmament could take several different shapes and forms. For example, it may be unilateral, bilateral or multilateral and therefore require lower or higher levels of cooperation. A nuclear disarmament process may also involve different degrees of cooperation depending on the possessor state(s) involved and the material-political context, for example, whether a higher level of disarmament is required and according to the size and scale of the state's nuclear weapons complex. The third concern is that *cooperation with disarmament* does not take into account domestic sources of political behaviour and cooperation. For example, a state may be greedy—and thus less cooperative, or have more modest goals—and thus be more cooperative, depending on the issue in question, as well as the extent to which it corresponds to the state's existing strategic aims and its ability to achieve them. As noted above, Herz (1966: 237) himself identifies that state behaviour, can—at the extreme—be imperialist and driven by the interests of 'subnational groups'. A theory of nuclear disarmament should therefore take a state's strategic goals into account when assessing how cooperative it is or is not being regarding an initiative, alongside assessing the utility and legitimacy of the initiative in question and the aims and strategies of the identifiable domestic groups driving a state's cooperative or non-cooperative behaviour.

Connected to this third point is the fourth concern that *cooperation with disarmament*—and similar studies that adopt a liberal viewpoint—focus on action pursuant to disarmament being taken by existing decision-making elites. For example, Wheeler (2009: 2) argues that ‘achieving radical reductions in nuclear arms’ will require NWS leaders with ‘imagination’ and ‘empathy’ that can be translated into ‘state policies that can build trust’. Such leaders also need to have ‘the domestic political support to take a series of unilateral measures’. Yet such studies tend not to examine whether these elites are actually inherently incapable of co-operating and building trust on this topic, nor whether elite decision-makers and the institutions they inhabit and maintain are in fact themselves obstacles to disarmament so that more radical political change is necessary, or what the current state of public opinion on nuclear matters is and what factors influence it. This is an important consideration because NWS elites have deep ideological investments in nuclear weapons systems and have historically, to a great extent, blocked substantial progress being made on nuclear disarmament.

In relation to this, Lawrence Freedman and Jacob Nebel have made important criticisms of the analysis of Perkovich and Acton. For example, Freedman (2009: 143-144), reviewing both the approach of these authors and that of similar investigations, questions how far nuclear disarmament can ‘be taken as an elite project?’ He goes on to pointedly characterise the style of such works as ‘geopolitical engineering enterprises’ whereby ‘barriers are to be cleared by judicious treaty language here, a technical fix there, and a confidence-building measure to follow.’

The key question for Freedman here is thus where public opinion fits in to nuclear disarmament given that in these works it 'appears rather distant, as nothing more than a supposedly approving chorus. Yet governments must be accountable to their electorates. If this undertaking is going to be treated with the seriousness it deserves over an extended period, public opinion will need to be engaged.'

Similarly, Nebel (2012: 8) chides Perkovich and Acton for 'leaving popular opinion out of the picture,' citing the author's own framing of their work as part of an 'enormous renovation project' for 'experts from a representative range of states' as a source of what he terms 'movement pessimism'. Nebel (2012: 9) claims that this is a serious error because, with regards to the US, 'the historical record indicates that the disarmament movement has immense political potential. The disarmament movement has constrained decision-making even in the most pro-nuclear-weapons administrations.' The key question Freedman and Nebel's analysis raises concerns what *theory of political change* is being proposed by the different approaches to nuclear disarmament. This study therefore aims to contribute to existing studies emphasising the need for cooperation to achieve nuclear disarmament by investigating the role decision-making elites across NWS play in helping or hindering such action.

Notably, Wheeler (2009: 19) does discuss domestic political change in relation to how Argentina and Brazil reversed their nuclear rivalry in the 1980s. In addition to leaders from both sides developing empathy for one another's 'security concerns by

taking a series of reciprocal confidence-building steps', Wheeler (Ibid) argues that another key 'lesson' to be learned from this experience is the 'importance of democratisation to trust-building' because leaders came to power 'who were aware of the growing political and economic costs and risks of pursuing a unilateral approach to security'. Yet whilst it is argued that such findings, including regarding democratisation, could be applied 'for building trust elsewhere', this is not meant universally but for 'cases such as South Asia, Northeast Asia, and the Middle East' (Ibid). Yet, as I shall argue in more depth in this and later chapters, we need to understand the domestic politics of nuclear possession for all NWS—including Western liberal democracies—and the ways in which democratisation may assist the path to national and international disarmament.

The fifth concern is that *cooperation with disarmament* as a conceptual tool is neutral and can thus work against nuclear disarmament as much as it can support it. For example, as several analysts have noted, the NPT was seen by the Soviet Union and United States as a means of protecting their power and privilege during the Cold War. Since then, the NWS have repeatedly stated that they are committed to achieving a NFWF on a multilateral basis, despite all the evidence to the contrary. Maintaining this facade is important if NNWS are not to lose faith in the NPT bargain, as *their* cooperation is essential to prevent nuclear proliferation and the loss of the exceptional influence that NWS currently enjoy. Whilst the great powers may therefore criticize one another's military buildups and actions, including on nuclear issues, there is also a tacit understanding that they must prevent NNWS from

delegitimising and diminishing their position in the international hierarchy of states. This can be seen in the recent concerted efforts by NWS to boycott and block negotiations on a nuclear ban treaty, which received the support of 122 nations in a vote at the United Nations in July 2017 (NTI, 2017). In a world consisting of what Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane describe as 'asymmetrical interdependence', whereby 'the more asymmetry you have in your favor, the stronger you are, the more you have of some resource, the more your advantage in influencing the outcome of an event', uneven power relationships are continually generated between states (Kreiser, 2004). The fact that the great powers, to different degrees, dominate international institutions that have ostensibly been built on equal cooperation and participation thus needs to be kept in mind when identifying which actors are responsible—and to what extent—for the present disarmament impasse.

Overall, *cooperation with disarmament*, as an approach that focuses on the challenges of securing cooperation under anarchy in order to achieve nuclear disarmament, is thus primarily important because of its focus on disarmament's international security implications. However, as Keohane suggests, it is important to analyse how 'constraints and incentives' at the domestic and international political levels interact. In terms of providing a full explanation of the causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament in and between NWS, this means examining relevant developments in the domestic arena in tandem with those in the international arena. Ultimately therefore, given the normative sensitivity surrounding discussions of this topic, the incomplete and speculative nature of any

study of disarmament and the need to develop an analysis based on a close familiarity with both the technical aspects of disarmament and the political histories of nuclear possession in and between NWS, we must conclude that *cooperation with disarmament* is a useful approach to the topic, but is, for our purposes, one that can only fill in some parts of this complex puzzle.

2.5 Approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament

Moving beyond realism: Campbell Craig and Daniel Deudney

Just as there is a lively tradition of discussion within realism and several proposals regarding how its analysis may be improved upon from liberal and institutional theorists, so there are a variety of critiques of it from without. For the purposes of this inquiry, Campbell Craig and Daniel Deudney's work provides two the most relevant responses worth reviewing. Craig (2003: ix-xi) in *Glimmer of a New Leviathan- Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau and Waltz*, is keen to present nuclear weapons and war as a problem not just for realism but for 'formal American thinking about international politics' as a whole. Despite this, he argues, such concerns play a 'strikingly small part' in this body of work, so that Mearsheimer, amongst others, 'consigns the problem of nuclear war to the margins'. Craig (Ibid: xi) explains this by noting that such authors maintain an obdurate belief that 'nuclear deterrence has largely eliminated the possibility of thermonuclear war'. At the same time, Craig—with Sergey Radchenko (2017: 23)—has recently written of the nuclear

revolution's importance in preserving peace because 'the aversion of leaders to nuclear war' is what 'best explains the absence of major conflict among nuclear powers over the past 70 years'.

In contrast to IR scholars who dismiss the 'implications of the thermonuclear revolution', Craig (2003: x) notes that Jervis and Deudney have been at the forefront of examining how nuclear weapons 'can be reconciled...with modern Realism'. Given the unwillingness of mainstream IR to deal with these issues, Craig (2003: 129, 172) questions whether realism, which he casts as a 'static conception of international relations', can survive as a theoretical approach if it does not seek to advance past 'the continuation of anarchy and of nuclear deterrence'. This is because whilst nuclear deterrence may have worked to keep the peace in the Cold War, it will, he writes, 'sooner or later' result in 'thermonuclear war' that is likely to 'kill hundreds of millions of people and possibly exterminate the human race' (Ibid: 172). Craig, like Nick Ritchie and others, therefore accuse defenders of the nuclear status quo as being 'utopian' in denying the inevitability of eventual nuclear conflict. For Ritchie (2012), 'real' realism thus logically entails support for NPS taking progressive action on nuclear disarmament in order to create a NFWF.

Craig (2003: 171; 2015) suggests that if realism can be saved as a relevant theory, it will be because 'the fear of nuclear war', threatening human survival, could provide the motivation to overcome anarchy. This may occur via 'common action' to

eliminate nuclear dangers and involve 'the establishment of an authoritative, centralised world state'. Thus for him, any meaningful answer to the threat of nuclear catastrophe 'can only be attained by concerted international cooperation' yet he asserts that this is 'something very difficult to achieve in an anarchical interstate system'—a problem we have previously discussed above (Craig, 2015). The development of a world state, which for Craig (2009: 27) would entail 'the abolition of anarchical great-power politics', has, as he points out, been hinted at by leading 'realist' thinkers such as Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau.

However, in addition to Craig and Waltz, these two thinkers have serious concerns about the consequences of creating such a state, principally because it might create a global tyranny. Craig (2003: 49, 66) also discusses how, as with Herz (1966), Morgenthau and Niebuhr found that a shift away from international anarchy towards world government required the development of a world community so that loyalties had to shift from the national to the international level. He also raises the important point that Niebuhr, Morgenthau and Waltz all 'gravitated towards the normative goal of great power peace', a shift towards an internationalist rather than a nationalist position of a kind similar to Herz's, as noted above (Craig, 2003: 164).

An issue that once again emerges from Craig's analysis of the three authors discussed in *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, is the lack of detailed thought given to the political forces that could drive nuclear disarmament, great power peace and a

reformed international order which ameliorates or overcomes the problems posed by anarchy. Overall, this work therefore does not thus seek to provide answers to the methodological, normative and political questions raised by the thermonuclear revolution, but does highlight some of the key problems and questions that leading realists faced when coming to terms with it. For insights into the indicators and conditions for nuclear disarmament we must look elsewhere in Craig's oeuvre.

For example, in his article *Weberian World Government in the Nuclear Age*, Craig (2015) argues that 'the unique qualities of the nuclear revolution' makes 'securing a monopoly over violence' a task which is 'even more important to a prospective world government than it is to a traditional nation-state'. Moreover, drawing from the thinking of Alexander Wendt, Craig (Ibid) writes that finding a means of compelling or persuading the US to join an emerging world government 'constitutes the single greatest obstacle' to its formation. Meanwhile, in the book Craig co-authored with Sergey Radchenko (2008 i: 169), *The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War*, it is argued that the possibility of a state cheating and building a nuclear weapon secretly, means that 'international atomic control requires a qualitatively different level of international action if nations are to be persuaded to place their trust in it'. The problem of cheating thus means that nuclear disarmament would require all nations to 'transfer all of their technological and physical means of building atomic weaponry to a powerful international agency' which would need to persuade all nations that it could 'permanently...prevent any nation from secretly building another bomb' (Ibid).

Craig also elsewhere identifies, in a roundabout way, some of the other political obstacles to and opportunities for nuclear disarmament. For example, in his article with Jan Ruzicka (2012) *Who's in, who's out?*, the authors claim that the set of institutions forming the nuclear 'nonproliferation complex' are partly responsible for holding back disarmament progress by operating as:

a classic liberal institution that pretends to universalism while being in hock to the world's most powerful states. Moreover, its pursuit of modest, 'realistic' goals has helped to undermine the very possibility of substantial action on nuclear weapons.

In both this article and *The Resurgent Idea of World Government*, Craig (2008) explores how weaker countries face strategic choices in relation to more powerful states, drawing again on Wendt's work to observe that 'weaker societies' have in the modern era, an 'emerging choice between subjugation to powerful states and globalized forces or participation in an authentic world government', with the latter organisation being the only means of preserving national identities.

The argument Craig and Radchenko (2008: 170) present—that the choice the major powers face in the nuclear age is between 'sovereignty or international government'—is a formulation very similar to Waltz's view. The centralisation of power involved in disarmament thus, for him, essentially means that the agency

responsible for managing nuclear knowledge and materials 'would have to become like a state itself'. This was something during the Cold War that neither the then Soviet Union or the United States was willing to countenance because it would, Craig and Radchenko (Ibid) assert, mean relinquishing their 'sovereignty to the agency'. As Craig (2008) makes clear, when it comes to contemporary discussions of what world government might entail, Daniel Deudney has, in his work *Bounding Power* provided 'the fullest and most creative vision yet of formal world government in our age'. It is therefore appropriate to investigate Deudney's work further at this point to build on the ideas and insights already discussed.

To begin with, Deudney directly tackles problems of institutional power in his work, taking an approach that is both descriptive and prescriptive. His ideas are also developed out of a critique of the leading mainstream and realist writers we have encountered, including Waltz, Mearsheimer and Keohane. Whilst great power conflict did not occur during the Cold War, Deudney (2011: 282) argues that 'it is impossible to say' whether this was the result of nuclear weapons or some other cause. Alongside Jervis, he therefore believes that the central questions about the nuclear revolution—'How likely is deterrence failure? What will happen after nuclear use?' are 'unanswerable with any assurance' (Ibid: 283). Moreover, following the end of the Cold War, we have moved into the second nuclear age, which is defined by 'the diffusion of nuclear weapons capability to small and often revisionist states, and possibly also to non-state actors' so that the possibility of 'deterrence failure is much more likely' (Ibid: 284). Nuclear weapons—which previously benefited US

hegemony—thus now threaten its interests so that Washington has had to take a series of steps to prevent proliferation.

Deudney (2011: 287) moves on to pose the intriguing question of whether the dynamics prevalent in the current age 'will provide the catalytic impetus to a fuller revolution not just in the conduct of states but in the basic practices and structures of the anarchic interstate system itself'. However, elsewhere, in an observation complementing Craig's view, Deudney (2016) states that nuclear weapons have created a 'paradoxically perverse effect' whereby they both necessitate 'an exit from anarchy', given the fact that the system is prone to 'potentially catastrophic failure', but simultaneously 'impede the traditional path to exit from anarchy', by which he means, 'some form of authoritative world government'.

In order to move beyond this problem, Deudney (2007: 48) develops and adds the idea of 'negarchy', as a third type of international system, to anarchy and hierarchy. Deudney's advocacy of negarchy is based on the need to find a way out of the contemporary international military-political situation, which combines anarchy and the pronounced 'violence interdependence' created by nuclear weaponry. Importantly, negarchy is 'self-ordering', meaning that it avoids the top down imposition of order in favour of an 'alternative "republican federal" set of practices' where actors are 'authoritatively ordered by relations of mutual restraint', rather than hierarchical subordination and anarchical orderlessness (Ibid). To bolster his position, Deudney (Ibid: 270) employs the concept of Republican Security Theory,

which is based on the principles of liberty, sovereignty and limited government as a means of refining and improving on liberal and realist proposals for managing international order.

As with some of the other realists noted above, Deudney—in addition to discussing the meaning of the nuclear revolution for international politics—notes the impact that the possession of nuclear weapons has had on domestic liberty, but goes into greater depth about what this means in practice. For example, in *Bounding Power*, Deudney (2007: 255) discusses how nuclear weapons are ‘intrinsically despotic’ and have created ‘nuclear monarchies’ in all nuclear-armed states. Deudney identifies three related reasons for this development:

the speed of nuclear use decisions; the concentration of nuclear use decision into the hands of one individual; and the lack of accountability stemming from the inability of affected groups to have their interests represented at the moment of nuclear use.

For Deudney (2007: 7), a state’s moves to ensure its security e.g. via nuclear possession can therefore lead to the centralisation of decision-making in powerful institutions, with deleterious results for democracy and liberty, so that he identifies a realist ‘neglect of domestic hierarchy as a security threat’. Conversely, ‘republican and Liberal theory and practice’ addresses this problem by focusing on ‘the restraint

of domestic hierarchy as a security threat over progressively larger spaces' (Ibid: 8). The legitimacy of the constitutional republican government he proposes, created to ensure state security, would thus derive from 'popular sovereignty'—the will of the people (Ibid: 47). In republics, the people are in control of arms 'either directly or indirectly' so that arms control is fundamental to this system of government (Ibid: 50).

Such thinking informs Deudney's (Ibid: 258) response to what he describes as the 'nuclear political question', whereby he identifies four groups that outline 'the relationship between nuclear weapons and the state system.' These he labels as 'classical nuclear one worldism, nuclear strategism, automatic deterrence statism' and 'institutional deterrence statism.'²⁰ Deudney (Ibid: 246) then presents the approach he subscribes to, namely, 'federal-republican nuclear one worldism'. This position, which is worth presenting in full, argues that nuclear weapons have:

rendered the statist approach to security nonviable, and that security in the nuclear era requires the establishment of an institutionalized division between territorial units and nuclear capability. Instead of either the continuation of an interstate anarchy or the establishment of a world state, a federal-republican union of strong mutual restraint is needed to provide

²⁰ There is not space here to outline what each of these groups covers, suffice to say that of them only *classical nuclear one worldism* could, through the founding of world government- which it sees as the prerequisite of global security- embrace the idea of nuclear disarmament.

security. This view holds that a world hierarchical government would entail an uncheckable concentration of power, and is unnecessary in the absence of an interplanetary threat (Ibid: 248).

Crucially, whilst this approach (and Deudney's overall analysis) provides us with the kind of two-level and normative approach required by nuclear disarmament, focused on domestic and international security and liberty and how they interact, he does not advocate or present a theory of nuclear disarmament. Instead, because Deudney (Ibid: 258) values how nuclear weapons 'have greatly reduced the problem of interstate aggression, while creating a new threat of general annihilation' he prefers to find a means of managing the power of nuclear weapons for the common good. His new approach thus proposes that the 'territorial state system' not be replaced but 'complemented with a nuclear containment and restraint system' so that 'nuclear capability is separated from state control and paralyzed' (Ibid: 259).

In outlining 'federal-republican nuclear one worldism', Deudney (Ibid: 249) also does not, like the other realist authors named above, embark upon a detailed examination of the domestic or international nuclear politics of the major powers, nor does he identify the potential political sources of change that will facilitate the transformations he outlines. This may partly be because Deudney exhibits a similar caution to Mearsheimer, arguing that it is not possible to definitively prove his proposals or explanations. The question of what will drive nuclear restraint or

disarmament and the extent to which these will be popular or elitist projects thus still hangs in the air.

Notwithstanding such unresolved issues, much in Deudney's analysis can be borrowed from, explored and built on for our purposes. For example, his Republican Security Theory may be repurposed to imagine scenarios where nuclear disarmament is realised. This can be done in relation to Deudney's concept of 'bounding power' a twofold idea referring to the massive advances in the power of military technology, which has increased beyond previously imaginable bounds, and the need to put boundaries and controls on it via agreed restraints (Ibid: 27-28). The value of this approach for the problems posed by nuclear disarmament is that it addresses interconnected security problems at the domestic and international levels. In this sense, it presents a fusion of the second and third images of Waltz, dealing with the causes of international conflict that exist at the unit (national) and system (international) level. Deudney (Ibid: 50) thus sees the evolution of negarchy, as involving 'the establishment of increasingly cobinding mutual restraints on armed force', which in the case of nuclear weapons might practically involve gradual arms control and disarmament measures.

The meaning of nuclear disarmament, which we may now provisionally suggest following our discussion of Deudney's work, could therefore entail a transition from nuclear monarchies to non-nuclear democratic republics, concurrent with a

transformed global security order where both interstate anarchy and hierarchical world government is eschewed in favour of a negarchic republican federation. Such a scenario clearly raises several big questions, not least of which is how we may differentiate between the changes required for nuclear disarmament in and between each NWS given their various political and strategic positions and processes, and the respective political forces that may be required to achieve such change. In order to begin our exploration of these questions, the next section will focus on the concept of *institutional democratisation*, which will help us both bring together and build on the insights gathered so far and further refine our understanding of what nuclear disarmament might mean in practice for NWS.

2.6 Approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament

The domestic politics model and institutional democratisation

Having reviewed the work of several prominent realist authors and their critics, we may now both identify the main gaps in the literature and outline ideas for improving our understanding of the causes and consequences of NWS nuclear disarmament. In doing so, our inquiry will come to focus on the concept of *institutional democratisation*. Before outlining precisely what this idea entails, it is necessary to briefly summarise our findings from the preceding discussion. Firstly, despite several authors—including from within the realist tradition—noting the domestic political impacts of the nuclear revolution, including on such crucial areas

as liberty and democracy, their main focus when debating this subject remains on the international level and the ways in which anarchy is moderated by the balance of power and nuclear weapons.

Mainstream realist IR thus principally understands the nuclear revolution to be a historic development within the anarchic system with great significance for national and international security. This is because the nature of power and the defense-offense equation were changed so that the great powers moved from defensive to deterrence-based relationships. According to all of the authors reviewed above, the period of unprecedented great power peace and stability that existed during the Cold War was, albeit to an extent that cannot be precisely specified or proven, can be significantly attributed to the impact of the nuclear revolution. For many of these authors, great power nuclear disarmament is thus both clearly undesirable, given the risks of instability and conflict it poses, but also likely unrealisable given the political and technical obstacles it faces.

A related question which our reading of the realist literature raises is whether great power nuclear disarmament can occur within anarchy, for example, as a result of a two-track process of domestic political reform and international cooperation to mitigate fear and uncertainty, or whether it requires anarchy to be replaced by

hierarchy e.g. a world government.²¹ Deudney's analysis complicates this question by adding a third structure—negarchy—to the mix. Would one of these three structures be better suited to nuclear disarmament than the other? In response to these questions, we may optimistically, but still cautiously, suggest at this early stage of our inquiry that nuclear disarmament could imaginably be possible within each structure and that negarchy, whilst under-specified as a means of supporting disarmament processes, is particularly promising.

Furthermore, as we have seen, of the three structures, there is much more informed debate about the consequences of anarchy and the possibility of mitigating its effects in order to achieve nuclear disarmament. But as with the often ambivalent response of scholars to the nuclear revolution itself, our conclusion regarding the possibility of great power nuclear disarmament under anarchy, as one of—if not the—biggest possible within-system changes, must remain hopeful yet inconclusive. Whilst this is a frustrating outcome, we should remind ourselves of the inherently speculative nature of our subject matter and aim to provide clearer responses to these questions after having conducted our review of nuclear politics in and between NWS in Part Two. Moreover, we may still constructively propose at this point that *institutional democratisation* constitutes an important problem-solving tool within each structure, not least because of the ever-present need to hold powerful actors accountable for their actions and ensure that political processes

²¹ Great power nuclear disarmament is here taken to mean an unspecified lower or higher level of disarmament involving the US, Russia and China.

enjoy popular legitimacy.

Leaving aside structural questions for now, several of the authors we reviewed have noted that nuclear weapons decision-making is—at least in part—driven by internal politics as well as external factors. Moreover, as Deudney makes clear, nuclear weapons have important domestic political consequences in the states that possess them. If we are therefore to imagine how nuclear disarmament might come about it is incumbent upon us to look at both the internal *and* the external political arenas when discussing the meaning and significance of the nuclear revolution. Additionally, most of the authors reviewed above do not either fully outline what they imagine the causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament to be, or provide well-rounded measures and indicators for disarmament.

Where authors do engage meaningfully with the idea—such as Charles Glaser and, to an extent Campbell Craig and Daniel Deudney—there are gaps in their analysis, particularly at the domestic level. There are different reasons why this is the case for each author. Some authors (such as Mearsheimer and Waltz) are fully supportive of the nuclear revolution, for example, because it benefits the US-led global order—which they generally see as liberal and benign and because nuclear possession contributed much to the maintenance of peace and stability during the Cold War. Other authors (such as Jervis, Glaser and Deudney) are much more ambivalent about the nuclear revolution—particularly given the dangers of the second nuclear age.

And whilst some (such as Craig, Schelling and Herz) see nuclear disarmament as potentially beneficial, they also feel that its requirements, which include: domestic political transformations; the development of effective conventional deterrence; robust monitoring and verification; world government—present very steep, if not insurmountable, hurdles. Given the rejection of or skepticism regarding nuclear disarmament, mainstream IR—and realist literature in particular—thus understandably spends little or no time considering the domestic sources of political change that might facilitate nuclear disarmament nationally and internationally. This absence is ultimately a symptom of structural realism’s pessimistic theory of political change, which focuses—albeit in different ways according to the author—on anarchy as the main factor determining a state’s international behaviour.

One of the other main reasons why nuclear politics tend to be treated in this limited fashion is that the subject, in both mainstream and more critical security discourses, is very often viewed in terms of the material and military qualities of the weapons themselves. However, as scholars such as Jervis appreciate, of more importance are the ideational and political implications of the nuclear revolution—which are much more difficult to measure, especially given the secrecy surrounding nuclear arsenals. The next step in our study must therefore be to find a means of purposefully investigating in more depth the domestic causes and consequences of nuclear *possession* in and between NWS in order to then understand the domestic causes and consequences of nuclear *disarmament* in and between NWS. First of all, this requires us to analyse the internal nuclear politics of each NWS to flesh out what

Deudney's (2007: 250) 'diagnosis of the misfit between the state system and nuclear explosives' means in practice for each NWS. By undertaking this analysis we will then be much better placed to: i) appreciate the political obstacles to and opportunities for nuclear disarmament in and between the NWS ii) consider what domestic and international political *changes* are required to advance and realise nuclear disarmament, including what domestic and international political *forces* are needed to drive such changes forward.

In order to consider the requirements of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral nuclear disarmament action, in addition to looking at the circumstances of each NWS individually, this also means considering the pertinence of different political solutions. For example, if nuclear disarmament is to collectively occur for the NWS will each NWS ultimately have to become a non-nuclear democratic republic within a global republican federation, or are there less extreme but still effective options? It is reasonable to suggest that the answer to this question will only become clear at some point after the disarmament process has begun and will likely depend on factors such as the level of nuclear disarmament required for each NWS, which is a question that will inform what the disarmament process comes to mean politically for each NWS.

Returning to the question of how we can move beyond our previous discussion of the four mainstream IR traditions and their approach to the nuclear revolution and disarmament, it is important to recognise that we will also need to revisit the issue

of how nuclear disarmament has been justified, as previously outlined in Chapter One. By reviewing the powerful objections to global nuclear disarmament relating to the stability of a disarmed world, and the supposed security dilemmas that this would generate, we have gone part of the way to accomplishing this task. This is because we can both identify useful ideas and information from the literature that opposes, is critical or ambivalent towards the idea of nuclear disarmament that we can adapt and borrow from and familiarise ourselves with key arguments we need to provide rebuttals to. The next step in constructing a new approach to nuclear disarmament thus involves drawing on existing ideas and analysis from the pro-disarmament camp, particularly concerning the domestic and international causes and consequences of nuclear possession and disarmament and the way in which these two levels interact.

In conducting this initial survey of the pro-disarmament literature, we shall focus on the concept of *institutional democratisation*. This is a useful term to deploy here because it both provides a potential solution to the absences and gaps we found in our previous literature review and because it captures the spirit of much of what the *disarmament first* literature and movements are based on and trying to accomplish. Before considering what *institutional democratisation* might mean in practice as a driver of disarmament and how it has been previously deployed in the literature, it is useful to discuss how we may define the term given its treatment in the wider political and social science literature.

As David Held (1992: 10), William E. Hudson (2013: 1) and Seva Gunitsky (2015) note, democracy is a complex concept, the definition of which—government or rule by the people—raises many questions.²² Having reviewed several indexes, Gunitsky therefore observes that we should be ‘extremely careful’ when using different measures of democracy given the highly contested and subjective nature of the topic. He recommends that we must also make clear the ‘inherent biases’ in the measure chosen to identify ‘what causes democracy’ and justify our choice ‘in relation to what is actually being examined’ (Ibid). As for Hudson, having conducted his own review of four different models for democracy, his conclusion is that although ‘part of the meaning of democracy is a continued discussion of the meaning of democracy’ certain ‘common elements’ may be discerned, namely, ‘popular rule, equality and liberty’ (Hudson, 2013: 20-21). Held (1992: 20), meanwhile, proposes that if democracy is to ‘flourish’ it needs to be reimagined as a ‘double-sided phenomenon: concerned on the one hand, with the reform of state power and, on the other hand, with the restructuring of civil society’. This is necessary to ensure that the ‘active citizen’ can once more ‘return to the centre of public life’ and participate meaningfully in communal decision-making.

²² Several other academics and research groups have provided means to measure democracy (Munck & Verkuilen, 2002; Coppedge & Gerring et al, 2011). For example, the Democracy Index produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has five dimensions that:

‘measure the nature of electoral processes (e.g. free elections), functioning of government (e.g. checks and balances on government authority), political participation (e.g. voter turnout), democratic political culture (e.g. popular support for democracy) and civil liberties (e.g. a free press, independent judiciary) in a country’ (McCulloch, 2014).

Political institutions, meanwhile, have also been defined in different ways. For example, Konrad von Moltke (2001: 11) sees them as ‘social conventions or “rules of the game”’, Marie Gottschalk (2000: 5) as ‘those formal organizations and procedures that determine “who gets what when and how” for a society’ whilst Robert Keohane (1998: 383) describes them as ‘a general pattern or categorization of activity’ or a ‘particular human-constructed arrangement, formally or informally organized’. Combining these two terms together, we may propose that *institutional democratisation*—for the purposes of this study—refers to the process of making the institutions of each NWS that are related to nuclear weapons decision making subject to the principles of popular rule, equality and liberty as part of an ongoing discussion regarding the realisation of the common good and sustainable security for national and international society. In terms of nuclear disarmament more specifically, such processes of democracy, transparency and accountability should ultimately be geared towards the restraint and elimination of illegitimate concentrations of power to enable the dismantling of nuclear weapon systems.

Robert C. Johansen (1991: 210-212; 1992: 113) has developed complementary ideas in his work, arguing that states ‘need to transform National Security into Democratic Security’. This is because traditional concepts of security (i.e. related to realism) discourage democracy at the international, domestic and individual level. By contrast, democratic security ‘begins with the assumption’ that all are ‘entitled’ to collective and popular participation in ‘those decisions that profoundly affect their lives’. Secondly, security must be for ‘all people’ and not for ‘abstractions like the

state’ or ‘particular governments, governing elites, and their immediate supporters’.

Thirdly, democratic security entails the protection of ‘human dignity and widely agreed-upon human rights’. Notably, both Johansen (1991: 212) and Held (1992: 11) propose a cosmopolitan approach to democracy. For example, the former argues that global interdependence means that ‘ultimately each of the world’s governments must be held accountable to all people affected by its major decisions, whether they live within that government’s borders or not’, whilst the latter avers that ‘national democracies require international democracy if they are to be sustained and developed in the contemporary era’. Overall, Democratic Security as a concept may be seen as compatible with Deudney’s Republican Security Theory, not least because Johansen (1992: 212) discusses how traditional approaches to security legitimise military institutions that are ‘hierarchical and authoritarian’ giving ‘a tiny, nuclear-armed set of governing elites an undemocratic, literal power over the future of civilization and life itself’.

Given the definition and discussion of *institutional democratisation* provided above, the concept can be seen as drawing on and developing the second of Scott Sagan’s (1996: 63) three models regarding why states build nuclear weapons—namely the ‘domestic politics model’, which focuses on the ‘domestic actors who encourage or discourage governments from pursuing the bomb’. *Institutional democratisation*, as we shall see, develops Sagan’s model in important ways. This is firstly because it

specifically applies to the politics of nuclear disarmament, rather than why states build the bomb.

Secondly, Sagan (Ibid: 64) observes that ‘there is no well-developed domestic political theory of nuclear weapons proliferation’ that can identify the conditions enabling coalitions of actors to be formed which can ‘become powerful enough to produce their preferred outcomes’ concerning a state’s nuclear choices. Through discussing the meaning of *institutional democratisation*, this study seeks to remedy this situation by specifying how domestic nuclear politics works in each NWS in order to consider what internal changes are required for progress on disarmament to be made.²³ In order to develop such approaches to fill the gap Sagan identifies concerning actor coalitions, it is useful to borrow ideas from studies that use a domestic politics model to explore defence and foreign policy decision-making more widely.

For example, Nikolas K. Gvosdev and Christopher Marsh’s (2014: xiii, 9), work on Russian foreign policy considers how state behaviour may be ‘disaggregated’ according to the different ‘actors and avenues of approach’ pushing and pulling policy in various, sometimes ‘contradictory’, directions. Rather than the state enacting one consistent and coherent policy, the existence of multiple ‘sectors and

²³ The domestic political sources of nuclear weapons decision-making have been previously explored in the work of several authors, including Graham Allison (1971), who sought to explain US and Soviet decision-making during the Cuban Missile Crisis using a bureaucratic politics model.

vectors' within the state, representing different power centres, can thus result in 'a set of contrasting and competing foreign policies' (Ibid: 8). Thirdly, because Sagan's theory concerns why states seek the bomb in the first place, his theory does not consider either the impact that nuclear possession has over time on domestic politics within each NWS—which may be described as nuclear development—nor the preferences and responses of the citizens of NWS to their state's nuclear status.

Robert Dahl (1985) provides a more explicitly democratic approach to the problem of nuclear possession in his *Controlling Nuclear Weapons: Democracy Versus Guardianship*. In this work, which focuses on the US nuclear politics, Dahl (Ibid: 3-7) pursues a similar line of argument to Deudney, stating that because 'these weapons have largely escaped the control of the democratic process', US citizens have 'perhaps unwittingly adopted the Principle of Guardianship'. The idea of guardianship refers to the notion that only 'a minority' of 'well qualified' people within a state are capable of making 'collective decisions'. Owing to the supposed complexity of nuclear weapons, Dahl (Ibid: 7) proposes that US citizens have 'turned over' decisions in this area to 'a small group of people' and makes the blunt point that 'it is very far from clear how, if at all, we could recapture a control that in fact we have never had'. Whilst Dahl (Ibid: 72) provides an important investigation of how to solve the problems of nuclear possession and guardianship through democratic means, which include the development of a citizenry which has 'sufficient *competence*' in order to exercise 'sufficient *control*' regarding nuclear decisions, he does not link his study to the challenge of nuclear disarmament.

However, Dahl's terminology is useful for this study and may be adapted to broadly distinguish between two different approaches to nuclear disarmament. The first, which may be referred to as the *guardianship* model—of which *cooperation with disarmament* is one example—can be said to refer to the idea that existing NWS decision-making elites alone are sufficiently capable to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament and that, generally speaking, the citizenry are not capable of playing an active or significant role in this endeavour. As shall be discussed further in Part Two of this study, the *guardianship* model of nuclear arms control and disarmament thus involves a series of incremental, step-by-step measures which NWS elites generally agree are necessary and sufficient to, at the international level, make progress on their NPT obligations. The alternative model is *institutional democratisation*, which, as we've seen, refers to the idea that nuclear weapons decision-making should be controlled by the citizens of NWS. Popular involvement here is vital given the domestic barriers to progress on nuclear arms control and disarmament involving existing economic, political and social institutions and the obstructive behaviour of decision-making elites. Whilst there is some overlap between the two models, so that agreements and initiatives involving top-level decision-makers that contribute to military restraint and strategic stability are of vital importance, for example, this study ultimately argues that the *guardianship* model is, by its nature and location in the establishment, inherently limited in terms of the progress it can make on nuclear disarmament. *Institutional democratisation* is therefore necessary to drive forward and enact the far-reaching political changes required by NWS nuclear disarmament.

Despite Dahl not discussing disarmament in any depth, the use of *institutional democratisation* to explain nuclear disarmament does exist in the literature, although such works do not use this exact term. Relevant ideas that we may draw on can be found in the works of authors and scholars such as Kennette Benedict (2016), Elaine Scarry (2014) and Scilla McClean (1986).²⁴ National and international civil society groups, which these and other authors have been involved in, have, since the dawn of the nuclear age, highlighted the role that public opinion—particularly regarding opposition to the bomb—should play in decisions of war and peace. Identifying where national and global citizenries stand on nuclear issues is surely a vital concern for any study of nuclear weapons decision-making, as the main source of legitimacy for governments given the importance of the topic, and shall be fully explored in Part Two.

Applying ideas associated with *institutional democratisation* to the domestic political sphere as a means of making progress on nuclear disarmament has been proposed by civil society groups such as Oxford Research Group (ORG) since the early 1980s but has been neglected or forgotten as an idea since then by more mainstream discussions of the topic, despite some small protest and research groups continuing with related efforts. Such civil society work on disarmament is based on a belief that the secrecy surrounding the development and reproduction of nuclear weapons

²⁴ It is notable that these and many of the other authors researching and writing on the question of nuclear disarmament in NWS do so outside the mainstream of academia. The fact they exist outside the establishment in these nations may in fact facilitate their ability to advocate alternative security policies, including visions of disarmament, since the university sector is part of state power and prone to reproducing and supporting elite doctrines.

along with the highly centralised decision-making structures regarding their use, is incompatible with and deeply corrosive to the spirit and functioning of democracy. According to this analysis, for nuclear disarmament to succeed, each NWS must move towards a setup whereby the domestic political conditions that allow nuclear weapons to flourish are no longer present, or have been dramatically reduced. Pro-disarmament thinking has also connected the question of nuclear disarmament to the wider nature of NWS's defence and foreign policy. Such authors from the critical security, leftist and anti-imperialist tradition—particularly in the Western NWS—place principles such as democracy, social justice and international law at the centre of their analysis and calls for an alternative approach (Gittings & Davis eds, 1997; Curtis, 2003; Monbiot, 2006; Falk, 2014).

Veteran US disarmament activists I interviewed such as Joseph Gerson, Andrew Lichterman and Jacqueline Cabasso, argue that nuclear disarmament is thus not just about nuclear weapons but, especially in the case of the US, requires major societal changes given the centrality of the nuclear weapons complex to the economy and military culture. Nuclear disarmament therefore will entail 'transforming domestic power structures' to 'redistribute wealth and power' as part of a democratic process of moving to 'environmentally sustainable economics'. For the US this will mean, they argue, 'popular social movements' creating a 'change in culture and ethics' to reduce the power of the 'military-industrial complex'.²⁵

²⁵ Interviews: AL; JC; JG

In order to apply existing ideas and approaches from pro-disarmament movements and make them relevant to today's environment, it is necessary to conduct a review of the nuclear politics in and between the NWS to develop a theory of nuclear disarmament that is both rigorous and up-to-date. I shall explain further in Part Two how this investigation shall proceed, suffice to say here that important considerations which need to be taken into account to illustrate the value of an approach based on *institutional democratisation* include: i) the strategic power of each NWS and their strategic relations ii) the regime type of each NWS e.g. more or less authoritarian or democratic iii) the past, present and future causes and consequences of nuclear possession and disarmament for each NWS.

As we have seen, realist authors are skeptical of the potential for democratisation alone to succeed in creating the conditions for international peace and security. For example, Niebuhr (Craig: 2006, 52) argues that anarchy will prevail until all the great powers became democratic. Secondly, Waltz draws on the historical record to argue that even if a state is or becomes democratic it will still be prone to conflict under anarchy. He also argues that it is unrealistic for peace and stability to rely on all democracies being of a similar nature. Several points can be made in response to these observations, the first being that it is not possible to make a definitive judgment about the future impacts of democratisation on the international system. Secondly, there needs to be some objective measurement of how democratic a state is in order to make useful assessments, principally because Waltz's case studies do not include modern democracies or those with more developed democratic

processes. Thirdly, Deudney's Republican Security Theory goes some way to potentially solving the problems posed by both anarchy and hierarchy by proposing a third way i.e. negarchy. However, Deudney does not himself propose a theory of nuclear disarmament or one sympathetic to it, and, despite emphasising the need for democratic legitimacy, does not develop a theory of political change to explain how his proposals may be realised.

Having briefly considered what *institutional democratisation* pursuant to nuclear disarmament might mean on a domestic level, based on past and present work from academic and civil society, it is appropriate to finish this section by outlining the work of international civil society and global governance with relevance to the nuclear revolution and disarmament. This is also important to consider in order to identify potential international sources of political change. As noted above, in addition to nationally based civil society (primarily in France, the UK and US) engaging in pro-disarmament action—including education, protest and research—as reviewed in the unique historical work of Lawrence Wittner (2009), a vibrant international peace and disarmament movement exists whose ideas and proposals need to be taken into account. Global as well as national public opinion is also an important indicator of the people's will regarding nuclear issues and should be studied when crafting recommendations for new and reformed policies and institutions. For example, recent global public opinion polls appear to show widespread support for the goal of a NFWF and shall be explored in full in Part Two of this study.

Yet realist thought often sidelines such evidence, instead claiming that the domestic nature of states, regimes, groups or individuals is irrelevant to nuclear decisions or outcomes (Solingen, 2007: 11). Indeed, as we've seen, Mearsheimer (2001: 77-78) posits that actors can be treated as 'black boxes or billiard balls' because the international system itself causes conflict. Ole Holsti (1992, 2012) argues that 'realists' of all stripes (including Morgenthau in his earlier writings) have thus generally seen public opinion as 'largely irrelevant in the conduct of foreign affairs' because of its volatility and lack of coherent structure. Importantly, where the public has preferences which are 'allegedly driven by emotions and short-term considerations', realist thought has tended to present officials and leaders as rational and cool-headed.

However research conducted in several democracies, including in Europe, Japan and the US, has found that where anti-nuclear weapons public opinion, protest and civil society activism exists, it has exerted an influence on the degree and type of action taken by governments. This corresponds to Thomas Risse-Kappen's (1991: 510) finding that whilst mass public opinion in liberal democracies rarely has a 'direct affect' on 'policy decisions or the implementation of specific policies', it does 'set broad and unspecified limits' to 'foreign policy choices'. It has thus been argued that civil society action has been significantly responsible for increased cooperation on arms control (Knopf, 1998), the creation of nuclear weapons free zones and moves to ban nuclear testing (Wittner, 2009), the development of a taboo against the use of nuclear weapons (Tannenwald, 2008) and the decision by a number of states to

exercise restraint and not seek to acquire the bomb (Ruble, 2009). Rather than being emotional and unstable therefore, Holsti (1992: 447) posits a 'rational public' thesis suggesting the public is a source of 'moderation and continuity rather than of instability and unpredictability'.

As well as examining civil society action on nuclear disarmament, we also need to consider how scholars have studied civil society and global governance literatures to identify relevant debates that we may utilise for our inquiry. From an initial and limited review of this literature, it is noticeable that nuclear weapons and disarmament are only engaged with in passing, if at all (Armstrong et al 2011; Burnell & Calvert eds, 2004; Wilkinson ed., 2005; Kratochwil & Mansfield eds, 2006; Colas, 2002; Stout & Love, 2016, Weiss, 2013; Keane, 2003). Some notable exceptions, which present a fuller analysis, do exist—including works by Richard Falk (2014) and Mary Kaldor (2003: 12)—with the latter tracing the conceptual origins of global civil society to the dialogue between the 'West European peace movement and the East European opposition' in the 1980s. Yet in other prominent works the subject is absent—a silence that is particularly striking given the historic weight ascribed to the nuclear revolution by scholars such as Waltz. More widely, academics such as David Armstrong, Julie Gilson (2011: 6-7) and Alejandro Colas (2002: 62) highlight the fact that civil society groups may not always consistently act in accountable, democratic and liberal ways, meaning that we should remain cautious when assessing their claims to political legitimacy and potential contribution to disarmament.

Of the many challenges involved in nuclear disarmament then, the fact that the civil society and global governance literature appears not to consistently and fully recognise that it is desirable or realisable, or engage substantively with the extensive mainstream IR and strategic studies literature covering nuclear issues, is problematic. Yet whilst not all those studying civil society and global governance mention nuclear issues important issues of relevance to this inquiry are clearly raised. For example, Thomas Weiss (2013: 25) has put forward global governance as a 'halfway house' between anarchy and world government. For Weiss, global governance makes cooperation easier, a proposal complementary to Deudney's explanation of negarchy and Republican Security theory as being a constitutional alternative to anarchy and hierarchy. Notwithstanding the challenges noted above then, it will be important for this study to both understand how a theory of nuclear disarmament relates to discourses concerning civil society and global governance and draw on the relevant knowledge accumulated in these areas by the scholarly literature.

Summary

This chapter's review of the range of approaches from within and without realism that engage with the nuclear revolution made several useful discoveries. For example, each of these approaches contained both descriptive and prescriptive elements, with authors basing their response to the nuclear revolution on what they

see as most beneficial for national and international security and the avoidance of nuclear war. However, in doing so, US security was treated as paramount by many of these authors, with some, such as Mearsheimer and O'Hanlon, advocating a particularly nationalistic approach. Meanwhile, nuclear disarmament was generally either seen as an enterprise that is undesirable and unrealisable—or potentially beneficial, albeit with several strong qualifications and reservations attached. These barriers to disarmament, it was argued, derive from the significant political, technical and diplomatic difficulties faced at the domestic and international levels. Whilst none of the authors reviewed thus explicitly advocated nuclear disarmament, significantly engaged with the pro-disarmament literature and its arguments, differentiated between its unilateral, bilateral and multilateral forms in their discussion, or dealt substantively with the domestic politics of nuclear possession and disarmament, each still raises important issues that any theory of nuclear disarmament must engage with in order to provide a well-rounded analysis.

These issues include those both of a more abstract and theoretical as well as a more concrete and political type, such as: i) whether nuclear disarmament within anarchy is possible or whether it can only happen within negarchy or hierarchy ii) whether nuclear disarmament would necessarily lead to anarchy being replaced by another system and the type of domestic, regional and global political and security frameworks it necessitates iii) how regional and international peace and security can best be managed before, during and after nuclear disarmament iv) the principles on which power transitions supportive of nuclear disarmament should be based e.g.

democracy, transparency and accountability v) the extent to which nuclear disarmament requires domestic political change and international political change, including cooperation between NPS/NWS to mitigate fear and uncertainty vi) the domestic and international political forces required by progressive nuclear disarmament action vii) how national and universal political identities and institutions can be reconciled.

Having identified these problems and questions, our next natural and logical move would be to propose an alternate approach or theory of nuclear disarmament that may be tested against empirical evidence, which in this instance would centre on nuclear politics in and between the NWS. Regarding the latter exercise, which we began to outline above, the fact remains that any investigation of the political causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament would be necessarily speculative since it covers something that has and is not happening.

We are thus faced with the methodological problem of how to 'test' any theory we may construct. For example, our preceding discussion leads us to make two important proposals. Firstly, that the nuclear revolution occurred at both the international *and* domestic levels, but the latter development has not been properly recognised by mainstream IR and political scholars nor fully explored historically, or in relation to the political institutions of the present day. Secondly, that in order for nuclear disarmament to occur, appropriate, concurrent and complementary political

change needs to take place at both levels. To this end, *institutional democratisation* is a concept which could both fill the gaps identified in our literature review and which provides a way forward by suggesting the type of legitimate and necessary political forces and processes that nuclear disarmament requires and will benefit from at both the domestic and international levels. Testing this theory would first mean investigating the causes and consequences of nuclear possession in and between the NWS to show how an analysis that takes the domestic impact of the nuclear revolution into account adds significant explanatory value in terms of each of these state's nuclear histories and present circumstances. Having done this, the second, more normative and speculative step would be to propose a theory of political change that supports the goal of nuclear disarmament in and between NWS.

PART TWO

Obstacles to and opportunities for nuclear disarmament in and between the nuclear weapon states

In Part One many of the key problems associated with nuclear disarmament were introduced and its meaning and significance, and the different ways it has been conceptualised, discussed. One key finding was that mainstream and realist works on the causes and consequences of nuclear possession and disarmament mainly focus on the military-security challenges presented by the anarchic international system, with abolition largely seen as an undesirable and distant, if not impossible, prospect. Due to the limitations of these analyses, the concept of *institutional democratisation* was developed as a means of rebalancing the study of nuclear politics towards the domestic level as a precursor to exploring how domestic and international nuclear politics interact to prevent NWS nuclear disarmament taking place. Moreover, it was also necessary to develop a coherent theory of political change for nuclear abolition in order to build on, refine and update existing ideas and proposals.

In order to provide some means of testing the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation*, we shall, in Chapters Three to Seven in the second part of this study, engage in a series of in-depth analyses of the nuclear weapons systems of each of the five NWS in order of their acquiring the bomb: US, Russia, UK, France, China. The point of doing this is to further show how the various theories and

approaches outlined in Chapter Two fail to capture the political dynamics that frustrate nuclear disarmament and how these might be overcome through adopting an approach based on *institutional democratisation*. Following this, Chapter Eight will summarise the relationships and interactions between NWS, contextualising this in terms of the wider sphere of global nuclear order, and by providing conclusions and recommendations supportive of *institutional democratisation* on a national level.

In terms of the flow of the five NWS case studies presented below, each has broadly the same structure, beginning with a section that provides an overview of how mainstream and realist theory explains the politics of nuclear possession and disarmament for the NWS in question, followed by an overview of how *institutional democratisation*—and ideas supportive of this concept—do the same. Both of these sections examine these theories in relation to the historical record and contemporary scholarship with the goal of showing how *institutional democratisation* brings value to the existing literature in relation to the question of the causes and consequences of NWS nuclear disarmament. In addition, both sections have a historical focus because they explore different perspectives on the origins and development of the bomb in each NWS, for example, in the context of World War Two and the Cold War. This is done to better understand the current meanings and value assigned to nuclear possession by elites and the wider society in each NWS, in order to then appreciate the politics of nuclear disarmament for each NWS.

In outlining the limitations to mainstream and realist explanations of nuclear possession and disarmament for each NWS the point is not to throw out in entirety the claims and ideas contained therein, for example, regarding the flaws of *cooperation with disarmament* and the *guardianship* approach to arms control and disarmament. Rather, our aim is to highlight and increase in emphasis the important role domestic political factors play in nuclear weapons decision-making as the precursor to discussing and evaluating the validity of *institutional democratisation* for a nuclear disarmament process applicable to the circumstances of each NWS. Having identified and compared different perspectives on the history of NWS nuclear possession, each chapter then includes a section that applies the theory of *institutional democratisation* to post-Cold War nuclear politics for each NWS. This is done, for example, by focusing on the domestic political obstacles to and opportunities for disarmament and the contemporary strategic challenges facing, and problems of international cooperation relating to, nuclear disarmament that NWS face today.

In terms of the size of these case studies, the chapters for Russia and the US are far lengthier than the chapters on the UK, France and China. This is for several reasons, including the great size of Russia and the US's nuclear arsenals, the fact that these two nations were the key participants in the Cold War nuclear standoff, and the availability and scale of the literature on nuclear issues for these two states. Given the importance of Cold War politics to the development of nuclear weapons in the US and the then Soviet Union, and the impact this conflict had on the other NWS, I

also include, for these two case studies, a discussion of competing explanations of the origins of the Cold War, based on what Andrew H. Kydd (2005: 80) describes as the 'motivations and beliefs of the two sides'. For example, I argue that whilst the mainstream and realist approaches reviewed in Chapter Two have diverse outlooks, generally speaking, they best correspond to what Kydd (Ibid: 3) describes as 'post-revisionist' or 'traditionalist' perspectives on the meaning of the Cold War and its aftermath. The former position traces the origins of this conflict 'to mistrust', so that the two superpowers were both security seekers, but their 'desire for security propelled them into conflict' and a highly tense nuclear standoff (Ibid: 4). As for traditionalism, this is more commonly found in the non-scholarly literature, including from more hawkish US military and government sources. As Kydd (Ibid: 82) notes, this position presents the Soviet Union as an 'inherently expansionist power, interested in exploiting cooperation, not reciprocating it, that is, untrustworthy' whilst the US is 'coded as a security seeker; trusting at first, and then increasingly fearful as time went by'.

The specific claims and ideas of *institutional democratisation*, meanwhile, correspond better to revisionist and other critical perspectives on the Cold War and US global strategy. For example, revisionist accounts of the Cold War, as Kydd (Ibid: 4, 83) explains, argue that the Soviet Union was 'primarily defensively motivated while the capitalist West was the imperialistic and aggressive party'. 'Orwellianism', meanwhile, contends that both superpowers were expansionist so that the Cold War was 'nontragic'. Notably, it is often the case that the critical nuclear literature, which

is supportive of or compatible with *institutional democratisation*, adopts a revisionist or Orwellian approach to the Cold War. Overall, introducing a discussion of competing historical perspectives in these sections, I argue, helps to both clarify the differences between various perspectives on nuclear politics and provide a coherent and clear framework within which we can develop more specific claims about US and Russian nuclear possession and disarmament.

In addition, for the US chapter, a section is included that highlights the idea of the NWS—and the US in particular—having dual nuclear disarmament responsibilities, both to eliminate their nuclear arsenals (and thus transition to FNWS status) and contribute to the creation of a NFWF. In terms of the former, the NWS made commitments at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to: i) reduce the salience—the role and significance—of nuclear weapons in their national security policy²⁶ ii) ‘apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their treaty obligations’, for example, on nuclear disarmament (United Nations, 2010). Regarding China, France, the UK and Russia’s relative strategic power, these nations have limited power projection capabilities so they do not play a comparable role to the US in terms of other state’s strategic thinking, including regarding nuclear weapons. Thus, whilst all NWS have dual disarmament

²⁶ As noted in Chapter 1, aspects of NWS’s current nuclear policies which could be changed to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in national security policy (also potentially as moves towards a VNA as part of the transition to disarmament) concern: i) acquisition: what kit is bought and owned ii) declaratory: public statements about the role of nuclear weapons iii) deployment: how nuclear weapons are arranged and positioned iv) employment: the circumstances and ways in which the government plans to use nuclear weapons to achieve strategic aims.

responsibilities, these are, albeit to varying degrees, much less significant than that of the US. For this reason, and given the limited space available to this study, I have not included a separate section on this issue in the chapters on Russia, the UK, France and China.

On an official level, it is worth noting here that the NWS collectively argue that they will be able to completely fulfill their nuclear disarmament obligations only as part of a multilateral and 'incremental, step-by-step approach', involving themselves and the other NPS, as noted in the 'P5's' joint statements (P5 Statement, 2015: 2). In general therefore, at an inter-governmental level involving the NWS, emphasis is placed on the need for top-level decision makers to create the conditions for international cooperation, which is typical of the *guardianship* approach to nuclear arms control and disarmament. As we saw in Chapter Two, many international relations scholars also promote this approach, although some, such as Glaser, do recognise the role domestic politics and sub-national groups play in driving arms races and conflict.

The next issue to consider is what method should be adopted in order to analyse NWS bearing all the above in mind. Clearly, we need to consider state behaviour from both a domestic and foreign perspective, so we can appreciate the national and international character of nuclear weapons decision-making. But we also need to recognise the different political forces at play within each NWS and neither treat the state as a monolithic entity nor mystify the process by which the ideas and materials

necessary for the perpetuation of nuclear weapons systems are actively being reproduced.²⁷

Recognising the provisional nature of the state and state practices allows us to approach NWS behavior, past and present, with a fresh and critical eye as required by this study given its intention to examine the potential for transformative nuclear disarmament action. The approach I take to NWS nuclear weapons decision-making may thus be described as institutional-historical. In addition, given the centralisation of such decision-making power in the hands of very small military and political groups across NWS, it is important to be clear that when referring to one or more of these 'states', we mean political executives whose actions principally reflect the interests and will of private concentrations of economic, social and political power, rather than the citizenry at large.

As a point of departure, we may identify a few of the similarities and differences between NWS that raise interesting questions. For example, whilst some of the NWS's governmental structures or 'regime types' have more similarities than others—such as France, the UK and the US—as formally 'liberal democracies', they

²⁷ Nick Ritchie (2012: 190) summarises this eloquently when he argues that 'the social, political, and technological systems, meanings, conceptual apparatus, and institutions that facilitate the production and deployment of nuclear weapons are not inevitable or enduring but must be actively sustained and reproduced over time. In fact, it is the contingent nature of this nuclear weapons system or actor-network that allows for the possibility of its collapse'.

are, at the same time, all unique in terms of history and culture. How have these different regime types, cultures and histories impacted on nuclear weapons decision-making and arguments concerning nuclear disarmament? Or, is it more pertinent to consider, as scholars such as McLean (1986) and Miall (1987) have done, the similarities between processes of nuclear weapons decision-making across NWS? For example, is it reasonable to conceptualise nuclear weapon 'systems' as a singularly elite, military-technical culture shared across NWS? Again, if this is the case, what does this mean for the project of nuclear disarmament today? As well as considering the factors reinforcing the continuation of nuclear weapons possession and modernisation, there is also the important question of what countervailing or opposing forces to the status quo exist, both nationally and internationally. Based on this understanding, and the requirements of *institutional democratisation*, questions we should consider in more detail include: what do recent public opinion polls in NWS and globally regarding nuclear weapons issues mean for the prospects of nuclear disarmament and, more broadly, what shape are national and global nuclear disarmament movements in today?

Chapter Three: United States of America

Introduction

As outlined above, this chapter provides an in-depth investigation of US nuclear politics in order to better understand the causes and consequences of US nuclear possession and disarmament and reveal the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation*. The sizable space and detail given to the discussion of the US in this chapter is, as noted above, justified by both the scale and global importance of the US military and nuclear establishments—which create the high level of responsibility the US has if nuclear disarmament is to be realised in and between NWS—and by the absence of an adequate analysis of domestic nuclear politics in the mainstream and realist works reviewed in Chapter Two.

The chapter begins with a summary of how the mainstream and realist approaches explored in Chapter Two relate to the US's particular experience as a NWS and how the US's nuclear status has been justified by government and military officials as well as scholars over time. This is principally done by placing the US's development of nuclear weapons within the context of relevant historical events from the mid to late 20th and early 21st century—focusing, in particular, on the Cold War. The next section begins the process of showing how the US's experience as a NWS illustrates the limitations of the previously reviewed mainstream claims and approaches and the ways in which *institutional democratisation* helps us better understand the causes

and consequences of US nuclear possession and disarmament.

It is important to distinguish here between the discourse concerning the causes and consequences of US nuclear possession and disarmament in the academic international relations literature explored in Chapter Two and that in other spheres where nuclear matters are most prominently discussed, for example, state bodies (whether military or civilian) thinktanks and NGOs. Perhaps the main difference with nuclear thought outside of academia is the absence of a theoretical approach to international politics, whereby abstract concepts such as anarchy rarely explicitly feature in debates concerning US nuclear weapons and national security.²⁸ As we will see, one may, for this reason, label the ideas discussed below as generally fitting within the realist camp, given their assumptions about society, politics and the causes of conflict, whilst they are not *structurally* realist. In addition, and as noted in the introduction to this chapter, the scholarly work we discussed in Chapter Two generally fits within a post-revisionist approach to the Cold War whilst mainstream non-academic justifications often tend to adopt a traditionalist perspective—with the Soviet Union presented as having posed an expansionist threat to a security-seeking and trusting US (Kydd, 2005: 82). Notably, whilst these historical perspectives differ as a whole from those that I argue are more compatible with *institutional democratisation*, there are also several areas of factual agreement and

²⁸ Whilst this is an important difference one can only provide informed speculation on the reasons for it being so. For example, it may be because scholarship's legitimacy in this area is based on claims of independence and objectivity whilst government's legitimacy in this area is based on claims of popular representation and ensuring national security from prevalent external threats.

overlap.

It is therefore useful to review prominent military analysts, historians and official state narratives to see how explanations for US nuclear possession have developed over time. In such accounts, the justification for the US's development and then continued possession of a nuclear arsenal focuses on the threat posed by external enemies—beginning with Nazi Germany during WW2, the Soviet Union during the Cold War and more nebulous adversaries and opponents, including from developing nations, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

In contrast, the claims presented by *institutional democratisation* centre initially on the domestic political drivers and impact of US nuclear possession, starting with the idea that the Manhattan Project marked the beginning of the US national security state—and the role this played in the US's global strategy following WW2. I therefore draw on the work of authors such as Robert Dahl to begin specifying the wider impact nuclear possession has had on the US's political system and to highlight pre-existing scholarly arguments compatible with the main contentions of this thesis. More specifically, I discuss how domestic elite actors and groups shape US defence and foreign policy, including on nuclear issues.

Having provided this comparative historical overview, I go into more detail concerning what *institutional democratisation* would mean in terms of political

change for the US when reviewing modern day US nuclear politics, updating Dahl and other's work in the process. This includes a consideration of the short to medium term nuclear arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament measures the US could take and the reasons for Washington's continued inaction and obstruction. This series of measures conforms to a more mainstream, liberal, *guardianship* analysis of the topic that focuses on the international level and interactions between NWS elite decision-makers as the basis for cooperation. I argue that whilst it is important to consider these steps and actions, this approach has several limitations. For example, a range of evidence is presented to show both how wide the democratic deficit is in the US and how this is reflected in the gap between US public opinion on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament and the actions of elite actors and the US government.

The following section of this chapter seeks to provide a major discussion of these issues in order to both challenge official justifications for the US's nuclear status and fill gaps in the mainstream and realist literature on nuclear politics. This is primarily done through an examination of the domestic economic, political and social drivers of US nuclear possession and its consequences. For example, the US government has historically presented nuclear possession as a necessity to ensure national security via deterrence given the external threats posed to US freedom and democracy and the nation's other vital interests. Yet critical security analysts, such as Dahl and Deudney, argue that the US's maintenance of such a huge nuclear and military establishment has serious repercussions for freedom and democracy at home.

Despite this, mainstream indexes of global democracy tend to present the US as beacon of democracy for the world and do not take into account such critical perspectives.

I then provide an overview of the US's post-Cold War global strategy and the role played in it by nuclear weapons, discussing how the US's conventional military power has a singular impact on other NWS's nuclear thinking and the implications of this for nuclear disarmament. From here, I argue that the US has a unique dual responsibility to advance nuclear disarmament by taking progressive steps on a national level and by acting in ways that support progressive steps being taken by other NWS. Another, more recent development in the US's nuclear arsenal, concerns how it is now managed and reproduced by private corporations—which I discuss in terms of what this means for democratic accountability and transparency. Subsequently, the present state of the US peace and disarmament movement is considered to explore its potential contribution to disarmament initiatives and how it may develop and be strengthened as part of a wider democratisation process. The chapter ends with a summary explaining its significance for the overall arguments put forward by this thesis.

3.1 Mainstream and realist perspectives on the causes and consequences of US nuclear possession and disarmament

Despite a variety of disagreements within mainstream and realist thought, such works generally see US nuclear possession since 1945 as justifiable and necessary. Several reasons are provided to justify this stance, including: the anarchic nature of the international state system; the peace and stability provided by deterrence in bipolar and multipolar worlds; the liberal, benign nature of the US's global power; the need to protect US allies, values and interests; and the difficulties and dangers posed by disarmament.

For example, historian Richard Rhodes (1986: 379) argues that US physicist's original motive for developing the bomb was fear of Germany triumphing in the war and establishing 'a thousand-year Reich made invulnerable with atomic bombs'. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were then widely celebrated for leading to Japan's early surrender in the war. Until the Soviet acquisition of the bomb in 1949 the US held an atomic monopoly, yet initiatives to manage atomic weaponry via an international agency—including the Acheson-Lillenthal report and the Baruch plan, proposed by the US, and the Soviet Gromyko plan—failed, it is argued, due to mutual mistrust between the superpowers (US DoE, 2017).

Such mistrust meant that the Cold War quickly became a nuclear standoff between East and West. Yet there was no consensus in the US concerning what the role of nuclear weapons should be. Tom Nichols and Dana Struckman (2017) of the US Naval War College therefore observe how,

there were strong divisions among American strategists about the purpose of nuclear weapons. For some, they existed only to deter nuclear attacks on the United States; for others, they were the military equalizer between an outgunned West and a gigantic Communist alliance.

The latter position informs the analysis presented by US Brigadier General Robert Spalding (2013), who argues that the US defeated the Soviet Union to win the Cold War ‘by maintaining a credible nuclear force’. According to this position, the US deployed nuclear weapons in Europe to defend it against the Soviet’s ‘numerically superior conventional force’. Moreover, the US’s formidable nuclear triad ‘deterred the Soviets from attacking’ and were at the ‘forefront’ of the US’s ‘defense strategy’ receiving ‘priority in both rhetoric and funding.’

Spalding’s (Ibid) justification for US nuclear possession here rests on the idea that nuclear weapons are the ‘US’s instruments of peace’ and that ‘peace can only be secured through strength’. Moreover, nuclear weapons are the ‘only aspect’ of the US’s ‘national defense’ that are capable of delivering such ‘peace’—and do so affordably. Spalding’s narrative here implicitly draws on a traditionalist perspective

which, Joyce P. Kaufman (2013: 78) explains, sees the Cold War as, ‘a war of *ideology*, which assumed that the two divergent approaches (democracy and communism) could not coexist peacefully. Therefore one side would have to emerge as dominant’. Nuclear possession, according to this ideological interpretation of the Cold War, was thus essential for the US, if it was to defend its democracy from the threat posed by communism. Indeed, Mearsheimer (Moore, 1996: 22) has described the US’s nuclear arsenal as ‘an ideal middle-class weapon and a strong force for democracy’. This is partly because, he claims, without a nuclear arsenal in the Cold War the US may have had to become a ‘garrison state’ leading to ‘crazy domestic politics’ as defense spending sky-rocketed with a bulging military (Ibid).

Framing nuclear deterrence as both essential for the defence of US democracy and legitimate because ‘approved, through the political processes of the democratic nations it protects, since at least 1950’, as Reagan’s Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger argued, is—on the face of it—a particularly authoritative means of justifying nuclear possession (Pringle & Arkin, 1984: 245). It is also one with several implications for this study, given our central contention that nuclear disarmament—particularly in France, the UK and US—requires *institutional democratisation*. Proponents of US nuclear possession today, may thus point to polling data showing public support for the US’s status as a NWS and Kerry Herron’s argument that, ‘the importance the general public attaches to US nuclear weapons capabilities is growing’ (Hey, 2000). Benjamin Valentino and Scott Sagan (2017: 5, 39) also argue that current attitudes amongst Americans to ‘the use of nuclear weapons and the

killing of noncombatants' shows that US public opinion 'is unlikely to be a serious constraint on any president contemplating the use of nuclear weapons in the crucible of war'. Despite such findings, however, realist thought and *guardianship* arguments generally tend not to ascribe great importance to public opinion, for reasons discussed in Chapter Two. Where prominent establishment figures do so, the public is presented as a body requiring expert guidance. For example, former Defense Secretary William Perry (2015: xvi, 195), emphasises the role of the public, so that that the US won't lead the world in 'reducing nuclear dangers...unless Americans understand the importance of doing so', but his argument fits within the *guardianship* approach because he believes elites must educate and guide citizens towards prudent policy.

Moving on to the narrower question of how the US deterrent operated during the Cold War, Halit Tagma (2010: 173), draws on the work of Lawrence Freedman to explain that the defining characteristic of the US's nuclear strategy, ever since the 'first Soviet test', was to strive to 'maintain a second-strike capability against the Soviet Union'. The US, according to this analysis, has therefore focused on maintaining a reliable deterrent against a Soviet attack, because both sides needed invulnerable retaliatory forces in order to create a 'nuclear stalemate'. As we saw in Chapter Two, proponents of US nuclear possession further argue that nuclear deterrence then successfully 'kept the peace' between the superpowers during the Cold War by inducing 'great caution in international politics' and discouraging 'the use of nuclear threats to resolve disputes' (Lieber & Press, 2006: 42). In recent years

the US government has presented several arguments in favour of its continued possession of nuclear weapons. Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates (US DoD, 2010: ii) provided a succinct justification for the US's nuclear arsenal in his foreword to the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, stating that:

as long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States must maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal to maintain strategic stability with other major nuclear powers, deter potential adversaries and reassure our allies and our partners of our security commitments to them.

Elsewhere, nuclear deterrence has been presented by the US government as 'the ultimate protection against a nuclear attack on the United States', preventing adversaries from pursuing undesirable courses of action, such as aggression with weapons of mass destruction (WMD), or nuclear weapons (US Department of Defense, 2014: 11; Kristensen et al, 2009: 8-9; US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015: 11).

The US government also claims that its extended deterrence relationships with regional allies (such as Japan and South Korea in East Asia) both provides reassurance and protects these—and other nations—from conventional or nuclear attack whilst also preventing them from developing their own nuclear arsenals (Obama, 2009; Roberts, 2013: 9). In addition to these central and extended deterrence roles, the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (2014: 11) states that, the

US's nuclear arsenal 'also supports our ability to project power by communicating to potential nuclear-armed adversaries that they cannot escalate their way out of failed conventional aggression'.

With regards to disarmament, as we have seen, mainstream and realist approaches from the US academy are particularly sceptical regarding its possibility, need and benefits. Still, some scholars discussed above—including Glaser and O'Hanlon—have given the subject sustained attention. As with these authors, the main obstacle to disarmament action in academic and officials analyses is generally taken to be at the international level. For example, representatives of the US government have previously claimed that the US has 'an outstanding and unequalled record of compliance' with its NPT Article VI obligations, and that it continues to reduce the role and size of its nuclear arsenal (Ford, 2007: 6). Yet Washington has also made it clear that 'as long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal', whilst also taking part in the step-by-step P5 process (US DoD, 2010: v).

In more hawkish variants of the US mainstream and establishment discourse, exemplified by former senior US officials such as Harold Brown and John Deutch as well as Keith B. Payne, nuclear disarmament is explicitly rejected. For example, Brown and Deutch (2007: 1) describe even the 'aspirational goal' of 'eliminating all nuclear weapons' as 'counterproductive' and a 'fantasy' since it 'risks compromising...U.S. security and international stability' whilst Payne (2007: 1) argues

that disarmament 'works at cross purposes with many other legitimate U.S. foreign policy objectives, such as deterring the use of WMD' and threatens to 'increase the prospects for catastrophe'.

Opponents of US nuclear disarmament often present Russia as a key barrier to meaningful nuclear negotiations. The Iranian, North Korean and Pakistani nuclear programmes also often feature in official publications as obstacles to international progress on NPT action plans (Wood, 2017). The official US narrative of Soviet and, thereafter, Russian intransigence and obstructionism has its origin in accounts of why Cold War initiatives to exert international control over the bomb failed, including the Acheson-Lillenthal and Baruch Plans and Reykjavik Summit (Payne, 2007: 3; Hoffman, 2014; US Office of the Historian, 2017; The Reagan Vision, 2017). Today, US government officials frequently argue that Russia's nuclear and conventional military modernisation, as well as recent actions in the Ukraine, threaten to derail arms control processes and strategic stability more widely. In particular, the development of new missile technologies have led to claims by the US that Russian actions threaten to undermine 'numerous agreements', such as the INF treaty (US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015: 2).

3.2 Critical perspectives on the causes and consequences of US nuclear possession and disarmament

In order to usefully apply the *institutional democratisation* approach to the US, it is important to provide an alternative explanation of the origins of nuclear possession in the context of 20th century history, focusing on the meaning of the Cold War, to support our subsequent argumentation. Of the alternative explanations of the Cold War, a revisionist perspective that highlights the importance of domestic factors best suits our needs and shall be outlined below. The main point in presenting this summary is to illustrate the main divergences with traditional, post-revisionist and mainstream analyses rather than provide a full historical reconstruction, both for reasons of space and to avoid repetition, given that there are several areas of factual overlap and agreement between these different perspectives.

Revisionist perspectives on the meaning of the Cold War take different forms. One striking explanation provided by several analysts (Chomsky, 1992; Melman, 1976; Kolko & Kolko, 1972; Kaldor, 1990) focuses on how the US and Soviet Union were both expansionist and used the Cold War as a means of inculcating fear and obedience to manage their domestic populations. Analysts such as C. Wright Mills (1956) also emphasise the importance of domestic economic factors driving foreign expansion, stating that the US has 'at once a permanent-war economy and a private-corporation economy'. Similarly, Chomsky (2004 ii) describes how Charles Wilson, CEO of General Electric, 'warned at the end of World War II that the US must not

return to a civilian economy, but must keep to a "permanent war economy" of the kind that was so successful during the war: a semi-command economy, run mostly by corporate executives, geared to military production.' In order for successive governments to justify to the US public the maintenance of the huge, centrally controlled, military infrastructure constructed during World War II, it was thus necessary to repeatedly invoke the threat of an aggressive Soviet Union as part of what Chomsky (1992: 21) argues, was a 'national security ideology for population control'. This was because, George Kennan (1987: 118) observed towards the end of the Cold War,

were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military-industrial establishment would have to go on, substantially unchanged, until some other adversary could be invented. Anything else would be an unacceptable shock to the American economy.

Looking more widely, as David Jablonsky (2002: 5) explains, an 'expansive concept of US national security' was developed during and after WW2, whereby national security was linked 'to so many interdependent factors, whether political and economic or psychological and military' so that 'the subjective boundaries of security pushed out further into the world, encompassing more geography and thereby more issues and problems.' Given such a broad conceptualization of security, 'developments anywhere' could be seen by Washington as having 'an automatic and direct impact on US core interests'. The result was the growing influence of military

and security concerns and an all-encompassing military establishment. This was reinforced by the Soviet military buildup, including the explosion in 1949 Soviet of a nuclear device, which implanted 'the image of an external threat' in the American mind (Ibid).

Kaufman (2013: 78) makes the compelling point that the Cold War was thus, in addition to being a war of ideology, 'a *political* war' whereby democracy and communism were seen as inherently 'antithetical', creating inevitable conflict. For Kaufman, the widespread belief amongst the US populace that communism was inherently expansionist and threatening 'had not only foreign policy implications for the United States but important domestic ones as well. The growth of McCarthyism and the Red Scare created a domestic atmosphere that supported U.S. foreign policy priorities'. In such a febrile atmosphere the possession of nuclear weaponry could thus be justified as necessary to ensure national security, whilst calls for unilateral disarmament could be presented by leading US political figures, such as Democrat Senator Stuart Symington, as 'surrendering to communism' (McFarland, 2001: 113).

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kennan's prediction regarding the continuity of the US's 'military-industrial establishment' proved to be accurate, as the same establishment espoused new threats to the nation in order to justify the retention of thousands of immensely powerful nuclear warheads. The peace dividend many expected to follow the end of the Cold War thus did not materialise because the people and groups occupying key positions in US economic and political institutions during the Cold War retained substantial influence and control after the fall of the

Soviet Union. Furthermore, it is argued that since the end of World War Two, from which the US emerged as the 'preponderant' world power, 'the US pursued an "imperial grand strategy" which sought to ensure "the limitation of any exercise of sovereignty" by states that might interfere with its global designs' (Leffler, 1993; Chomsky, 2003: 69). By this reckoning, the demise of the Soviet Union removed the principle brake on the US's pursuit of global hegemony, allowing it to move from 'containment' to 'enlargement', as President Clinton's National Security Advisor—Anthony Lake—put it (1993).

This brief summary of revisionist perspectives is useful to both understand the historical context in which the US nuclear arsenal emerged and developed as well as the impact of the bomb on US society and politics. For example, the consequence of President Roosevelt's decision to acquire nuclear weapons was, for Richard Rhodes (1986: 379), that a 'separate, secret state with separate sovereignty' was created, beginning with the Manhattan Project in 1939, which employed 130,000 people and was of a similar size to the entire US automobile industry (Gosling, 2010: 97). The immense size and secrecy of the US's nuclear weapons system, whereby top-level bureaucratic, military and political actors accumulated and centralised huge power away from the public gaze in the name of national security—justified as vital at a time of war—led the Atomic Heritage Foundation (2013: 11) to describe the legacy of the Manhattan Project as the creation of the 'national security state'. Gary Wills (2010: 1) explores this idea in his work, arguing that the US's acquisition of the bomb changed US history 'down to its deepest constitutional roots' because it 'redefined

the presidency, as in all respects America's "Commander in Chief", whilst also helping to foster 'an anxiety of continuing crisis, so that society was pervasively militarized'. Crucially therefore, a wartime mentality continued into peacetime, so that the US's nuclear arsenal was purposefully insulated from accountability and transparency measures, making it much more difficult to introduce democratic controls over these weapons, an essential condition for non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

For Robert Dahl (1985: 3), in *Controlling Nuclear Weapons*, this new technology thus presented a 'tragic paradox'. This was because whilst 'no decisions can be more fateful for Americans, and for the world than decisions about nuclear weapons' such decisions 'have largely escaped the control of the democratic process'. Dahl (Ibid) therefore argued that nuclear possession had contributed to the 'alienation' of political control. Rather than delegating authority to responsible experts in a representative democracy of the kind envisaged by the founding fathers, the US democratic process after the nuclear revolution was thus both becoming more and more 'hollow' and increasingly clothing 'a de facto regime of guardianship'.

Similarly, David Meyer (1990: 27) persuasively argues that 'despite conflict among policy makers about the political utility of nuclear weapons, US national security policy and the role of nuclear weapons within it, has been remarkably consistent. It has also been generally isolated from wider domestic political debate.' Meyer and Daniel Ellsberg have outlined the strategic rationale that explains why US policy

makers have consistently valued nuclear weapons. For example, Meyer (1990: 27) states that:

Since Harry Truman ordered the Little Boy detonated over Hiroshima, nuclear weapons have consistently been used primarily not to protect the territorial security of the United States but to support conventional forces and foreign policy goals. Increasingly diverse and multifaceted nuclear capabilities have been the ultimate guarantor of US military superiority in pursuit of a wide range of political and military goals. Given these broad objectives, Pentagon planners and elected officials involved in making policy have necessarily conceived of the use of nuclear weapons considerably more flexibly and broadly than has the general public.

Meanwhile, Ellsberg (Krieger, 2011: 54) observes that the US made twenty-five 'threats or consideration of nuclear first use in crises' between 1948 and 2008, going on to state that,

I suspect antinuclear activists in general have too little appreciated the link between our ambitious imperial policy- our belief that we had the right to a sphere of influence that extended right to the borders of the Soviet Union and China (now, the whole world) as in Iran, Korea, the Persian Gulf, Taiwan, Vietnam- and our reliance on first-use nuclear threats to make that feasible,

to give us a trump-card ability to protect our expeditionary forces thousands of miles from home from larger ground forces operating in their own neighbourhoods.

Meyer's work in particular complements Dahl's emphasis on the importance of democratic control, an idea that is explored in different ways by a range of authors. According to these analyses, domestic politics—including competing bureaucratic and institutional interests—rather than the machinations of foreign powers, are significantly responsible for driving nuclear weapons programmes. Moreover, the power of committed citizens and an engaged Congress to halt military programmes and achieve arms control agreements, such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the INF Treaty, is highlighted.

Other authors in this category include April Carter (1989: 25), who wrote on the domestic obstacles to nuclear arms control, including Presidential and Congressional electoral cycles and politics, as well as the 'difficulty of keeping secrets in Washington' and Janne E. Nolan (1989: 69; 1999), who discussed the domestic politics of nuclear strategy, including the associated 'entrenched bureaucracy' of military planners. Elsewhere, Peter Pringle and William Arkin (1983) focused on the secrecy surrounding the development of US nuclear war plans, whilst James M. Lindsay (1991), considered the role of Congress in nuclear weapons decision-making. More recently, Tom Sauer's (2005), work reviews the bureaucratic politics driving US nuclear weapons policy. Other historical works by former senior government officials

such as Strobe Talbott (1984: 229) highlight the ‘permanent, institutionalized acrimony’ behind US policy on ‘strategic arms control’. Whilst not all of these authors explicitly advocate or even focus on US nuclear disarmament, their work helps us to identify the main domestic obstacles to nuclear arms control and disarmament, including the powerful elites and related institutions responsible for reproducing the bomb.

For example, Sauer (2005: 25) argues that in the mid to late-1990s, there was a ‘growing consensus’ amongst non-governmental experts in support of minimum deterrence. As advocates of this policy, such as Hans Kristensen, and his co-authors, (2009: 1) explain, this would involve nuclear weapons having just one mission, ‘to deter the use of nuclear weapons’, which would, he and his co-authors claim, ‘lessen the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and allow for significant reductions in global stockpiles’. However, the political power of the arms control community and the peace movement at this time—which are important contributors to any process of *institutional democratisation*—was too weak to overcome the might of the ‘nuclear weapons establishment’. With regard to the peace and disarmament movement, Jacqueline Cabasso (2008: 33) also notes that during the 1990s several NGOs working on these issues moved to Washington DC and shifted their approach to ‘securing Russian “loose nukes” and keeping them out of the hands of “rogue” states and terrorists’.

As for the nuclear weapons establishment, Sauer argues that this consists of a

network of ‘gigantic bureaucratic organisations’, such as the Pentagon, which had been created during the 1940s and 50s. These institutions had four key interests in protecting the US nuclear weapons system from fundamental change—‘budget, personnel, autonomy and prestige’—which the proposed shift to minimum deterrence directly threatened. Moreover, whilst many in the military saw nuclear weapons as irrelevant and felt they should be discarded in order to procure usable weapons, any move towards disarmament was vetoed by a small group within the military—centred around the nuclear ‘targeting community’ (Sauer, 2005: 94).²⁹

Given the relative strength of the nuclear establishment and the weakness of the proponents of minimum deterrence—or nuclear disarmament for that matter—Sauer therefore proposes that there needs to be a ‘major societal debate’ in the US if the bureaucratic resistance to change is to be broken. For him, this would necessitate Presidential leadership, which harnessed the weight of public opinion in order to form a ‘bipartisan consensus’ in Congress (Ibid). In concluding her review of the failures of some members of the Clinton administration in attempting to reform nuclear weapons policy, Nolan (1999) puts forward a similar view, but focuses principally on the failure of the White House to show leadership and expend political capital in order to take on established bureaucracies—principally the Pentagon.

²⁹ This was despite the fact that the roll call of new nuclear abolitionists included senior military figures such as General George Lee Butler (former head of Strategic Air Command), General Andrew Goodpaster (former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe of NATO), Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll and General Charles A. Horner (who made his position known whilst still head of US Space Command).

Other critical and revisionist analysis focuses on the significant popular support in the US for action pursuant to nuclear disarmament. According to this perspective, presented by authors such as David Cortright (2008: 149-150, 323) key events—such as the Reykjavik summit involving Reagan and Gorbachev—therefore need to be seen in relation to the popular pressure in East and West to avoid a nuclear conflagration and make progress on arms control and disarmament. Jeffrey Knopf (1998: 247) also uses a ‘domestic structure approach’ to show how US ‘citizen activism on behalf of arms control and disarmament’ did have a significant impact on Washington’s ‘preferences for cooperation’ and entry into ‘strategic arms talks’.

The other side of this coin, for authors such as Meyer (1990), is that US decision-making elites have historically co-opted, sidelined or ignored underlying support for nuclear arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament amongst the populace. Such trends continue to this day, so that a 2004 poll by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (Kull et al, 2004: 9) found that a majority of the US public was ‘not aware’ that the US had ‘made a commitment to seek the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons as part of the Non-Proliferation Treaty’. When made aware of this fact, however, ‘a very large majority’ thought that ‘doing so was a good idea and that the US should make greater efforts toward that goal’. This finding is again representative of the broader absence of public debate concerning nuclear weapons in the US, which is both a result of and perpetuates citizens not treating such issues as a priority. Despite this, a report on how to communicate nuclear weapons issues to the public by the US in the World initiative (2009: 14) argued that ‘the fact that

the public does not think about nuclear weapons issues- yet still supports deep reductions in the number of weapons, and in some cases, concludes on their own that we need to eliminate all nuclear weapons is a real opportunity for advocates’.

Thus, contrary to those, such as Christopher A. Ford (2007: 1), who argue that the US’s adherence to Article VI of the NPT is ‘exemplary’, critics point to a series of actions the US should immediately take to begin reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in its national security policy and realise its dual international disarmament obligations. Such measures and proposals include: ratification of the CTBT; negotiation of a FMCT; support for all five existing and other proposed nuclear weapon free zones, including the Middle East WMD Free Zone; and the removal and destruction of the so-called ‘tactical’ weapons it deploys in five European nations, under ‘nuclear sharing arrangements’ (van der Zeijden et al, 2012: 8). Other early proposed actions, specifically directed at changing the policies governing the US’s nuclear weapons, include: taking nuclear weapons off alert; adopting a policy of No First Use; and the retirement and verified elimination of non-deployed reserve stockpile weapons (Kristensen et al, 2009: 2). There are also a number of actions the US could take in relation to diplomacy, arms control and trade, covering areas such as the US’s support for the nuclear weapons programmes of NPS—particularly the UK—and NAS.

Moreover, critics of US nuclear policy argue that recent changes wrought by arms control agreements such as New START do not match the majority of the public’s

expressed desires or expectations. Indeed, commenting on their research into US and Russia public opinion on nuclear weapons arms control and disarmament, John Steinbrunner and Nancy Gallagher (2008) observe that ‘responses to detailed questions reveal a striking disparity between what U.S. and Russian leaders are doing and what their publics desire’.³⁰

Steinbrunner and Gallagher (2008) therefore suggest that US political leaders should be much bolder in using their ‘bully pulpits to solidify and mobilize public support’ in order to articulate ‘a compelling alternative that is more in line with the public’s core values’. One of the broad alternatives these authors outline based on their research is that the US (and Russian) people would support leaders ‘who directed their own bureaucracies to alter fundamentally both the guiding objective and the action program used to address the challenges of the new nuclear era’ (Ibid).

3.3 US nuclear politics in the post-Cold War world

The previous section explored both the gaps in mainstream and realist accounts of the causes and consequences of US nuclear possession and disarmament and

³⁰ For example, their polling found that, ‘At the most fundamental level, the vast majority of Americans and Russians think that nuclear weapons have a very limited role in current security circumstances and believe that their only legitimate purpose is to deter nuclear attack. It is highly consistent, then, that the publics in both countries would favor eliminating all nuclear weapons if this action could be taken under effective international verification’ (Ibid).

summarised the explanatory value of *institutional democratisation* for this thesis in relation to the historical record. For example, the secretive and unaccountable development of the US's nuclear weapons was explained in relation to the political conditions of World War Two and the Cold War. In addition, the need to take into account public opinion on nuclear arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament given the striking democratic deficit exhibited in these areas and the importance of the popular will as a source of international cooperation was highlighted. This section builds on these insights concerning the value of *institutional democratisation* by first examining the role nuclear weapons play within the US's global strategy in the post-Cold War era. Understanding the goals of US global strategy—and what domestic actors and groups drive and shape these goals, both historically and in recent times—is vital if we are to properly examine the political barriers for moving to low numbers on the path to zero. Furthermore, comprehending the benefits decision-making elites believe nuclear possession brings—domestically and internationally—is an important part of understanding their resistance to disarmament.

The discussion then moves on to explore in more depth the domestic politics that shape Washington's strategic behaviour. For example, we shall examine how the nuclear weapons establishment is embedded within the US economy, state and society, and the obstacles to and opportunities for progressive change supportive of disarmament, such as *institutional democratisation*, presented by the status quo. In terms of obstacles, this means outlining which powerful domestic actors and groups,

with economic and political influence over nuclear weapons decision-making, drive the US's continued nuclear possession and prevent disarmament action. As for opportunities, this includes identifying the current state of those actors and groups in government and civil society that endorse progressive action supportive of nuclear disarmament. In addition, given the US's immense conventional military power—which has a singular impact on the strategic thought of all other states—the ideas of *institutional democratisation* can and should also be generally applied to US defence and foreign policy to imagine a process by which Washington reorients its global strategy so that it meaningfully contributes to and supports other NWS realising their nuclear disarmament obligations.

3.3.1 US nuclear weapons after the Cold War: retaining the bomb indefinitely

In *Empire and the Bomb*, Joseph Gerson highlights the fact that 'as the end of the Cold War began to be anticipated', the Reagan administration brought together senior military and strategic planners to formulate proposals for the new era. This resulted in the *Discriminate Deterrence* report of 1988, which highlighted that 'Japan and Europe were beginning to challenge US global hegemony' so that the US needed to focus on three regions: the Persian Gulf, Mediterranean and Pacific Ocean in order to remain the world's dominant power. Moreover, this necessitated that the Pentagon prioritise the modernisation of its nuclear arsenal and invest in military capabilities for rapid military intervention, including high-tech weaponry (Gerson, 2007: 20). Gerson (ibid: 215-216) points out that the 1991 Gulf War saw this report's

‘rationales and strategy’ being put into practice, a war which also saw London and Washington issuing nuclear threats to Baghdad.

Behind closed doors, military planners continued to develop ambitious plans for how nuclear weapons could be used. According to William Burr (2008), the leaked 1992 Defense Planning Guidance showed how, during the George H. W. Bush administration, Pentagon officials ‘tried to develop a strategy for maintaining U.S. preponderance in the new post-Cold War, post-Soviet era’, key to which was ‘preventing the reemergence of a new rival’. One of the authors of the report, Andrew R. Hoehn, argued that the US ‘must continue to maintain a diverse mix of survivable and highly capable nuclear forces, including non-strategic nuclear forces’, which, as Burr explains, would support the US’s ‘global role’, ‘validate security guarantees’ to regional allies and ‘deter Russian nuclear forces’.³¹

Thus, as William Arkin (1993: 24) described in a 1993 article, even before the end of the Cold War, as the nuclear complex grew ‘idle’ and a test ban loomed, ‘nuclear advocates in the military and the laboratories began highly creative efforts to identify new “requirements” for nuclear weapons’. These were partly a response to fears that new facilities would be cancelled and existing sites closed causing the loss

³¹ At the same time as taking advantage of the historic strategic opportunity the fall of the Soviet Union presented, Burr (2008) points out that then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and his advisers ‘wanted to develop lower-cost strategies and plans to prevent future global threats to American power and interests’ because they believed that ‘military spending at Cold War levels was no longer possible’.

of key production capabilities and lead to 'structural disarmament' (Ritchie, 2008: 32). Proposals thus emerged for a new generation of weapons including 'mini-nukes'—low-yield warheads capable of penetrating the ground for 'hard target and surface attacks'. Arkin warned that 'just conducting research' on these weapons would have several damaging consequences for international co-operation on security. For example, US-Russia relations would be harmed, 'anti-democratic military and nuclear mafias in Russia' would be strengthened whilst non-proliferation efforts and the chances of agreeing a test ban would be seriously undermined.

Hans Kristensen (1998: 33) makes similar points, emphasising that Clinton, whilst pledging that the US would not use nuclear weapons against NNWS, expanded its nuclear war plans to 'take on a broader role including rogue states armed with weapons of mass destruction'. As 'rogue states' increasingly acquired WMD (defined as nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons), the Department of Defense was able to characterise the international environment as evolving from a 'weapon rich environment' to a 'target rich environment' (Ibid: 22). Several observers of Clinton's policies from quite different backgrounds, including former military chief General Lee Butler (Schell, 1998), nuclear weapons policy expert Janne E. Nolan (1999) and disarmament activist Jacqueline Cabasso (Falk & Krieger, 2008: 34), therefore criticised his administration for squandering the opportunity after the Cold War to enact reforms that would delegitimise nuclear weapons. Instead, as Arkin (1993), and Sauer (2005: 64) argue, Clinton made a series of decisions that

strengthened and 're-legitimised' the US nuclear weapons system.³² Whilst Republicans were primarily responsible for the US not ratifying the CTBT in 1999, several scholars also note that Clinton's campaign to ensure it passed in the Senate was a failure, showing a lack of leadership on this vital issue (Sauer: 2005, 152). Overall, these developments have led Kristensen (2003: 4) to observe that military planners—rather than democratically mandated political leaders—had achieved significant 'leverage' in shaping the US's nuclear policies after the Cold War.

This last point is central if we are to understand the origins of the policies of the Bush administration, which several critics have cast as a radically aggressive shift in US defense and foreign policy.³³ Whilst this viewpoint is valid, it is incorrect to claim that the shift came suddenly and out of the blue. Rather, as William Burr (2008) points out, the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance calling on the US to 'prevent the reemergence of a new rival' informed the Clinton administration's strategy and forshadowed the 'preemptive doctrine that George W. Bush has tried to turn into an axiom of U.S. policy'. Indeed, as James Mann (2004) identified, the invasion of Iraq in

³² For example, the first new guidance for nuclear weapons since Reagan in 1981 was issued—Presidential Decision Directive 60—which reaffirmed nuclear weapons as the 'cornerstone' of US national security 'for the indefinite future' and gave the President more options when ordering nuclear attacks (Smith, 1997).

³³ For example, President Jimmy Carter (2005) reviewing the policies of the Bush administration, rebuked the US as 'the major culprit in this erosion of the NPT. While claiming to be protecting the world from proliferation threats in Iraq, Libya, Iran and North Korea, American leaders not only have abandoned existing treaty restraints but also have asserted plans to test and develop new weapons, including anti-ballistic missiles, the earth-penetrating 'bunker buster' and perhaps some new 'small' bombs. They also have abandoned past pledges and now threaten first use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states'.

2003 'was carried out in pursuit of a larger vision of using America's overwhelming military power to shape the future'. Furthermore, military planners during the Clinton administration signaled their determination to establish programs ensuring 'full spectrum dominance', as outlined in the Joint Chiefs of Staff's 2000 'conceptual template' for the US's armed forces, entitled *Joint Vision 2020*. This document described how the US would dominate 'in all domains- space, sea, land, air and information', by 'operating unilaterally or in combination with multinational and interagency partners, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the full range of military operations' (JCS, 2000: 6).

With expansionist plans such as these high on the military establishment's agenda, the stage was therefore well set for the incoming administration of George W. Bush. As is well known, the Bush team included several figures, such as Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz, with 'nationalist' or 'neo-conservative' outlooks.³⁴ This group had been closely involved in formulating policy under George H.W. Bush's administration and subsequently the Project for a New American Century, which stood for huge build-ups of high-tech weaponry and an increased role for nuclear weapons and military power at the expense of diplomacy (Burr, 2008; Gerson, 2007: 242). In 2001-2003 the influence of these officials on US strategic thinking, including on nuclear weapons, was made manifest in a series of documents, principally the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS), the 2002 National

³⁴ Cheney was Secretary of Defense under George H.W. Bush and now became Vice-President. Wolfowitz was Under Secretary of Defense under George H.W. Bush and now became Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction and the 2003 National Policy on Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD). Overall, the approach taken by the Bush administration was described by G. John Ikenberry (2002) as a 'neoimperial grand strategy', which, he lamented, would 'rend the fabric of the international community and political partnerships precisely at a time when that community and those partnerships are urgently needed.'

The NPR played its part by elevating nuclear weapons in US strategy to a level akin to that of Reagan's first term, specifically naming seven nations as primary nuclear targets: China, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Syria and Russia. The Review also called for investment in a new generation of more usable nuclear weapons, including a 'bunker-buster' to destroy enemy command bunkers and WMD sites deep underground (Gerson, 2007: 244).³⁵

James Goodby (2006: 188) argues that the NSS is 'essential' to an understanding of the Bush administration's approach to nuclear weapons policy and also 'codified Bush's preventive war thinking'. For example, the NSS states that 'We must build and

³⁵ Analysts such as Sauer (2005: 66) have noted that much of the thinking in the NPR and the Bush administration's nuclear weapons policy more generally, can be traced back to a 2001 report produced by the National Institute for Public Policy, a study directed by Keith B. Payne, who was thereafter given a senior position in the Pentagon. This document argued that the US needed a smaller, more efficient, arsenal' of specialised weapons. Some deeply buried targets, it argued, could only be destroyed by 'one or more nuclear weapons' (NIPP, 2001: 6).

maintain our defenses beyond challenge...our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military buildup in hopes of surpassing or equaling the power of the United States'. As Goodby points out, 'simply put' this meant that, 'unchallenged military supremacy over any other nation in the world, and anticipatory military action against perceived gathering threats' was 'at the heart of the Bush strategic doctrine'.

In practice, this new strategic framework included the construction and deployment of BMD, as a result of which, the US unilaterally withdrew in 2002 from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT)—considered by most countries to be a 'cornerstone of strategic stability' (Boese, 2002). In terms of the nuclear arsenal itself, restructuring took the form of further deep cuts to the nuclear stockpile, plans for new warheads—'mini-nukes' such as the B61-11 and a new approach to maintaining aging warheads—the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW).³⁶

The question of spending in relation to the survival and growth of the nuclear weapons production complex thus remains central to today's debate, as illustrated

³⁶ Whilst the RRW project was eventually cancelled in 2009 by the Obama administration, the NNSA soon came up with an ambitious new plan, termed '3+2', with a projected cost of at least \$60 billion. This was described by analyst Eryn MacDonald (2013) as a: '25-year plan to consolidate the seven existing types of U.S. nuclear weapons down to five-three interoperable ballistic missile warheads that could be used on either ICBMs or SLBMs; and two air-delivered weapons, a bomb and a cruise missile'. The key question she poses is 'Who Wants 3+2?', implying that it must be the NNSA, given that Obama had previously ruled out new nukes, Congress has expressed skepticism about the plans and 'there is also little enthusiasm' for it amongst the services who would use the weapons (Ibid).

by a 2012 Washington Post report (Priest, 2012), which pointed out that the US's nuclear arsenal 'is set to undergo the costliest overhaul in its history, even as the military faces spending cuts to its conventional arms programs at a time of fiscal crisis.' For example, the DoD and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) plan to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on nuclear weapons projects over the next decade and beyond. This includes \$68 billion to develop and purchase a new generation of nuclear bombers, \$347 billion to purchase and operate 12 new ballistic missile submarines and billions more on new nuclear weapons facilities (Hartung & Anderson, 2012: 1).

It is by these huge proposed outlays that we should assess President Obama's record on nuclear weapons. The sweeping and much-vaunted rhetoric of his 2009 Prague speech, whereby he stated 'America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons' evaporated against the formidable cliffs of the nuclear weapons establishment which was determined to retain nuclear weapons 'indefinitely'. Michael Izbicki (2010: 138) of the US Naval Submarine School thus provided an apposite summary of how current US policy will damage nuclear non-proliferation, when stating that 'it will be difficult for foreign powers to conclude that the United States is serious about a long-term reduction in nuclear weapons while we are modernizing our infrastructure so dramatically'.

The Obama administration's approach to nuclear weapons and broader national security concerns was outlined in four key documents, the BMD Review (2010 i),

Nuclear Posture Review (2010 ii), Quadrennial Defense Review (2010 iii and 2014), and Space Posture Review (2010 iv). Marco J. Lyons (2014), a US Army strategist, argues that the Nuclear Posture Review was produced as part of ‘significant continuity in policy and posture since the last NPR’ so that it ‘reaffirmed a fundamental role for nuclear weapons in national security’. Thus whilst Obama’s high-profile Prague speech was widely lauded as representative of a break from the Bush years—with his promotion of a nuclear weapons free world cited by the Nobel Committee as a reason for awarding him the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize—the policies he pursued in this area were not only in total harmony with preceding administrations, but, as Joe Cirincione (2013: 34) avers, shared by US national security experts ‘across the political spectrum’.³⁷

Brad Roberts (2013: 9), who helped lead the Nuclear Posture and BMD Reviews, states that an important influence on them, was the ‘emerging challenges to extended deterrence and strategic stability’, particularly in Northeast Asia, the Middle East and the Euro-Atlantic areas. With regard to the former, North Korea’s long-range missile and nuclear programmes and China’s military modernisation are highlighted as key challenges. This is because, it is argued, the US’s key allies in the region—Japan and South Korea—may seek their own nuclear weapons if the strength of the US commitment to protect them come what may is called into question. The curious argument presented here is thus that maintaining a strong and

³⁷ Joe Cirincione notes that Obama’s Republican rival for the Presidency—Senator John McCain—had stated in 2008 that ‘The United States should lead a global effort at nuclear disarmament’.

credible US nuclear ‘umbrella’ actually works to prevent proliferation and advance the cause of disarmament. In reality Washington does not want South Korea or Japan to develop their own nuclear weapons because it may then become dragged into a conflict.³⁸ Moreover, if US allies in one region seek the bomb this may cause allies in other regions to pursue their own deterrents—an act of independence which would make these ‘vassal states’ harder to control (McCormack, 2007).

This situation illustrates why, if a President wishes to go beyond rhetoric and enact meaningful, progressive reform to nuclear policy, they will need to have prepared an alternative strategic framework in order to change how the US relates to current allies if a more rational peace and security system is to be created. Any such initiative will, of course, also require significant political will—for example, as part of a process of *institutional democratisation*—if the nuclear establishment is to be successfully challenged (McLean 1986; Nolan, 1999).

3.3.2 The US’s dual nuclear disarmament responsibility

Before examining in more detail the question of *institutional democratisation* in relation to the US’s national nuclear disarmament obligations we need to first deal

³⁸ As Roberts (2013, 23) states, ‘a proliferation of strike capabilities among U.S. allies and partners would heighten the perceived U.S. risk of unwanted entanglement in crisis and escalation under the nuclear shadow’.

with the fact that the US has a particularly significant dual nuclear disarmament responsibility. The scale of this responsibility is important to outline so that our claim that *institutional democratisation* is a legitimate endeavour may be strongly established. This responsibility first relates to the US's nuclear arsenal and secondly, to the US's immensely powerful conventional military which has, as Waltz avers, a singular influence on all state's strategic thought, including as the main global driver of nuclear proliferation. Similarly, Brown and Deutch (2007: 1) note that, 'even in the absence of overwhelming superiority in nuclear weapons, the great predominance of U.S. conventional forces would remain a strong motive for aspiring states to seek nuclear weapons'. For the purposes of this study we therefore need to consider how the US can move from its current strategic posture to one supportive of NWS nuclear disarmament and the value of *institutional democratisation* to this process.

With regard to the US's first nuclear disarmament responsibility, one of the ways in which we may identify NWS and other NPS's responsibility to disarm, and contribute to the creation of a NFWF, is by considering which state's behavior has been more or less responsible for putting the global public's human rights in jeopardy through actions that increase the likelihood of nuclear detonation. Reviewing the historical record shows that, of the nine NPS, the US is primarily responsible for jeopardising these rights, given that since 1945 it is: i) the only state to have detonated nuclear weapons against another state—Japan ii) according to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation (2012), the state which has carried out the most nuclear tests, over 1000, damaging countless people's health in and outside the US iii) according to

a 2010 Stimson Centre study (Black, 2010), the state which has made the most threats to use nuclear weapons—to achieve political goals iv) the state which has engaged most widely in vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation, both qualitatively and quantitatively—including to the UK, France, India and Pakistan— so that as Joe Cirincione (2013: 134) has argued ‘past Democratic and Republican administrations have constantly placed proliferation and democracy concerns second to other geopolitical aims’ v) with Russia the only state to maintain nuclear weapons on high levels of alert vi) plans to, as described by Hans Kristensen and his co-authors ‘aggressively’ use nuclear weapons for war-fighting in a range of scenarios (Kristensen et al, 2009: 21), developing, as Lynn Eden (2011) and Zachary Keck (2015) have outlined, more and more accurate and thus lethal nuclear weapons vii) the only possessor state that stations nuclear weapons overseas and that provides extended deterrence guarantees to allied nations viii) is developing BMD, space-based weapons and advanced conventional capabilities. These are part of what David McDonough (2006: 11) describes as the ‘long-standing goal of American nuclear war-planners’ to achieve the capability to launch a disarming first-strike against an opponent, otherwise known as nuclear superiority, which is magnified as the US seeks to ‘prevent’ or ‘rollback’ the ability of weaker states—both nuclear and non-nuclear powers—to establish or maintain a deterrence relationship.

In proceeding with our discussion of the US’s second responsibility—to support other NPS in moving towards nuclear disarmament—it is firstly necessary to consider which US military capabilities (for power projection, for example) and what

behaviour is perceived as threatening by certain states, thus driving nuclear proliferation. Secondly, we will consider the options the US has to reduce such threats, including by Washington exercising strategic restraint, building more cooperative relationships with other states and supporting efforts to create a NWFZ. Following this, the next and final section of this chapter will consider the possible means by which changes to the US's strategic posture might take place to support the US realising its dual nuclear disarmament responsibilities, including, crucially, *institutional democratisation* with a view to increasing and making permanent popular control over defence and foreign policy.

According to Ben Zala and Andrew Futter (2013: 2-3) the US has, under Barack Obama's administration, sought to 'increase the role of advanced conventional weaponry' in order to 'reduce its own nuclear stockpile'. The danger they correctly highlight is that magnifying US conventional superiority 'essentially works to decrease US vulnerability in a nuclear disarmed world, while at the same time increasing the vulnerability of its current or future rivals and adversaries.' For example, China and Russia see their nuclear weapons as a means of deterring the threat posed by the US's far superior conventional forces (Hansell & Potter, 2009: 2).

The scale of these forces is immense—the US military operates 10 Unified Combatant Commands whose areas of operation span the globe, including more than 2,500,000 personnel and an estimated 1,000 military bases spread across each continent (Johnson, 2007). On top of this, Beijing and Moscow include in their

strategic calculations the US's advanced military capabilities, such as BMD, precision-guided munitions, long range conventionally armed weapons that can be assigned strategic goals, and the weaponisation of outer space (Zagorksi, 2011; Acton, 2013). Furthermore, as seen in the recent Ukraine crisis, Russia strongly objects to the expansion of US power close to its borders, which has occurred under the auspices of NATO. As Perkovich and Acton (2009: 30-31) therefore conclude, a NFWF would require the US to give assurances that the global elimination of nuclear arsenals will not lead to an increase in its relative military power and that any use of military force will be constrained by international law.

Of particular importance for our discussion is the Bush administration's 2002 withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT). As previously noted, the ABMT was seen internationally as a 'cornerstone of strategic stability' because it facilitated later agreements limiting and reducing US and Russian deployed strategic nuclear arsenals (Boese, 2002).³⁹ BMD is widely seen as an offensive first strike weapon because a functioning system would protect the attacking nation from an opponent's second strike (Hildreth & Woolf, 2010: 2). BMD therefore undermines strategic stability between the US and Russia, whilst posing a particular threat to China because it only has an estimated 45 Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) capable of reaching the continental US (Kristensen & Norris, 2015: 78). The result, as

³⁹ Today, the average annual US spend on missile defense (based on figures for 2013 to 2017) is an estimated \$9.5 billion (Loehrke, 2012), over four times more than the budget for the NNSA's defense nuclear non-proliferation programmes, whose work includes safeguarding dangerous weapons and materials in the former Soviet Union (NNSA, 2014).

the bipartisan Congressional Commission (2009: 32) on the US's strategic posture points out, is that China 'may already be increasing the size of its ICBM force in response to its assessment of the U.S. missile defense program'. Similarly Michael Byers (2000) has argued that, for Russia, 'the only rational response' to US BMD would be 'to maintain, and strengthen' its existing nuclear forces.⁴⁰

Chomsky (2003: 225) argues that US missile defense is only 'a small component of much more ambitious programs for militarisation of space, with the intent to achieve a monopoly on the use of space for offensive military purposes'. The US (alongside Israel) thus abstains from the annual UN General Assembly resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), which every other country in the world supports (RCW, 2014 ii). Both James Acton (2013) and Dennis Gormley (2010) have thus highlighted how Chinese and Russian military planners have concerns about all of the US's high-precision conventional weapons.⁴¹ Moreover, the US has begun research and development into even more technologically advanced systems, leading Gormley (Ibid: 88) to underline the importance of the US being

⁴⁰ Elsewhere, Yousaf Butt (2010) states that BMD is an unproven technology so that the current system 'cannot even reliably intercept a single missile that's launched at a known time and on a known trajectory'. He therefore argues that the real problem is that US policymakers might believe exaggerated claims about the system's effectiveness, thus emboldening them to 'stake out riskier and more aggressive regional policies'. Moreover, China and India have already begun 'following the US's lead' by developing missile defense test programs, with Pakistan likely to be next, a dynamic which could draw these nations into a cycle of proliferation, putting pressure on US and Russian policymakers to respond in kind.

⁴¹ For example, Gormley (2010: 87) states that Moscow fears that 'future advanced conventional weapons—together with improved missile defenses—could place Russia in a position of unacceptable vulnerability' as its nuclear forces may be targeted.

transparent over where these programmes stand today and ‘what restrictions or operational constraints’ it might be ‘willing to accept, if any, on their development or operation to accelerate the path toward nuclear abolition’.⁴²

Following the logic of President Obama’s (Broad & Sanger, 2009) statement that the US will ‘retain our deterrent capacity as long as there is a country with nuclear weapons’, if the US pursues improvements in its conventional military capabilities in order to enforce its global hegemonic designs, then it will not be able to relinquish its nuclear weapons. Ultimately then, if the US is to help create the political conditions for a NFWF it will need to accept that this involves a process of delegitimising the threat or use of force as instruments of state policy. Moreover, the US should show strategic restraint by abandoning plans to militarise space, expand its BMD network and develop more advanced conventional weapons such as precision guided munitions in order to provide certainty over its intentions and meet its NPT obligations.

An important part of this retreat from power projection will be a recognition that the US’s pursuit of global supremacy undermines not only other nation’s but also its own security. For example, the US now faces a real threat of nuclear terrorism from a range of potential sources. Former US Defense Secretaries Robert McNamara and William Perry (2009) believe that ‘there is a greater than 50 percent probability of a

⁴² These include the Conventional Strike Missile and experimental hypersonic technology.

nuclear strike on US targets within a decade'. This threat also stems from the failure to properly retrieve and secure fissile materials globally. Yet, despite Obama's promise to 'keep wayward nuclear weapons and radioactive material out of the hands of terrorists', David Culp (2014) reports that the administration has proposed to reduce the money available for nuclear nonproliferation programs—by \$400 million for 2015.⁴³

There is some awareness of the international impact of US military power in the top echelons of the US establishment. For example, in 2001, then Secretary of State for Defense, William Cohen (2001) outlined how:

At the dawn of the 21st Century, the United States now faces what could be called a Superpower Paradox. Our unrivaled supremacy in the conventional military arena is prompting adversaries to seek unconventional, asymmetric means to strike what they perceive as our Achilles heel.

The meaning of the 'Superpower Paradox' is that the more powerful the US is militarily and the more it projects this power globally, the more state and non-state actors will 'seek to acquire capabilities to inflict mass casualties and destruction:

⁴³ Culp (2014) also speculates that the Department of Energy has taken these funds to pay for increased spending (of \$534 million for 2015) on nuclear weapons following pressure from the Pentagon (NNSA, 2014: 7).

nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons or the means to deliver them'. Yet the DoD's solution to this was not for the US to reduce its military presence overseas or cut back military spending. Instead, the DoD argued that the US must increase counter-proliferation efforts (including the threat of conventional and nuclear weaponry) to prevent weaker (third-world) nations and non-state actors acquiring, threatening or using WMD against the US (Cohen, 2001). Hans Kristensen (2010: 9) highlights how this counter-proliferation mission led to the emergence of Global Strike under George W. Bush, a 'new phenomenon' consisting of 'a preemptive strategy focused on destroying WMD targets before they can be used'. One of the key dangers here is that the distinction between 'retaliation (deterrence) and preemption (Global Strike)' has been blurred.⁴⁴ As Kristensen (2010: 10) explains, this ambiguity did not evolve accidentally but was done on purpose 'to create uncertainty in an adversary's mind about a U.S. response'. The problem here is that whilst sometimes this might work and 'strengthen deterrence' in other situations 'it might undermine it and trigger military counter-planning or even the very escalation it was intended to prevent' (Ibid).

⁴⁴ Both Chomsky (2003) and Gormley (2009) agree with this analysis, except they argue that Bush's policy was one of prevention rather than pre-emption. Chomsky (2002) describes preventive war as 'the use of military force to eliminate an invented or imagined threat' and therefore 'the supreme crime that was condemned at Nuremberg'.

In terms of the potential for the US to move away from the status quo, recent surveys of public opinion have found that there is substantial support for defence spending to be cut, so that, according to Peter Cary (2017) of the Center for Public Integrity, 'public opinion is again at odds with Washington' on this topic. Other recent polls from the Pew Research Center (2016) and Survey Sampling International (Dyer, 2016) found that the majority of Americans want the US to 'focus on its own problems rather than expanding the military's role abroad' (O'Toole & De Luce, 2016). Similarly, when it comes to nuclear weapons, a Stimson Center (Kull et al, 2012) study found that two thirds of those polled 'decreased the budget for nuclear weapons, including eight in ten Democrats and two thirds of Republicans, with the sample as a whole cutting it an average of 27%—the largest area percentage cut'. This data reinforces the points made in the above discussion of *institutional democratisation*, highlighting the gap between US public opinion on military and nuclear matters and government policy. The question of how this gap might be closed will be examined further below, suffice to note for now that one of the major difficulties in shifting to a new approach will be how to reconcile the sometimes contradictory positions taken by the public on these issues. For example, according to Andrew Kohut (2014) of Pew Research, 'the typical American continues to look at world leadership with a fair degree of skepticism and is extremely wary of engagement in areas of conflict. At the same time, most continue to take considerable comfort in American military power.'

3.3.3 Actors and interests driving US nuclear weapons decision-making today

The previous two sections reviewed the approach policy-makers have taken to the bomb since the end of the Cold War, with a particular focus on the early 1990s, and placed this in the context of the US's global strategy and the US's dual nuclear disarmament responsibility, including the ways in which US conventional superiority drives other state's nuclear choices. This section will examine the domestic drivers of these policies, with the principle goal of understanding who is in charge of US nuclear weapons and how nuclear weapons decisions are made. The following section then proposes how *institutional democratisation*, as a theory of change focused on realising nuclear disarmament, may be applied to existing US nuclear politics.

It is useful to begin this effort by looking at the key governmental actors involved in US nuclear weapons decision-making, including their role and position in the policy hierarchy. Ritchie (2008: 10) provides a detailed overview of this in his study of US nuclear weapons policy after the Cold War, stating that 'the White House, in particular the office of the president, and the National Security Council' sits at the centre of decision-making, with the 'next policy ring encompassing executive departments and agencies'. The two primary government organisations involved in nuclear weapons policy here are the DoD and Department of Environment (DOE), within which sits the NNSA. Outside the executive and in the next 'policy ring' lies Congress, consisting of the Senate, House of Representatives and the judiciary. As

James M. Lindsay (1991: 163) notes in his study *Congress and Nuclear Weapons*, ‘members of Congress, no matter how well-intentioned, almost always lack in-depth understanding of nuclear issues’. Lindsay therefore argues that Congress fits within Dahl’s *guardianship* model, given the ‘tremendous disparity’ between it and the executive’s nuclear knowledge.

Given the apparent primacy of the Presidency in nuclear matters, when reviewing post-Cold War history US nuclear weapons policy, it is tempting to follow the work of Ritchie and others, such as former US ambassador James Goodby (2006), and organize an analysis of the period after 1989 according to Presidential administrations, including George H.W. Bush (1989-1993), Bill Clinton (1993-2001) and George W. Bush (2001-2009). The problem with following this approach is that whilst, formally speaking, the principal responsibility for nuclear weapons policy lies with the President, as the Oxford Research Group (ORG) study *How Nuclear Weapons Decisions Are Made* argues, in practice it is the power of the ‘permanent bureaucracies’ which both sets the agenda and strongly mitigates against change (McLean, 1986: 256).⁴⁵ Bureaucrats control the development of nuclear weapons systems which now last for ‘fifteen or twenty years’, much longer than the period in which government ministers—even Presidents—are in office. There is thus great pressure on elected officials to maintain consistency with their predecessor’s decisions, reducing opportunities and space for democratic deliberation and participation.

⁴⁵ As described above, this arrangement is common across all NWS.

Thus, as the ORG study explains, whilst the President is the 'ultimate decision-maker' on nuclear weapons issues, with the responsibility for implementing them, he or she will be faced by significant limitations. For example, 'like other decision-makers, the President will rarely see options unless he insists on them; by the time he is presented with a weapons issue for approval, almost all of the decisions are made'. Faced with an immensely powerful bureaucracy with deep-rooted interests in the status quo, 'unless he has a comprehensive, alternative policy formulation for national security a single system disapproval or variation would have no logic' (McClean, 1986: 62).

Money, power and the nuclear weapons establishment

In addition to a critical view of nuclear weapons policy at a governmental level and in relation to US grand strategy we need to examine what other non-governmental actors and groups are driving nuclear weapons policy. This section shall do this by first considering the different ways pro-disarmament analysts have conceptualised and critiqued the US's nuclear weapons establishment, as well as what action they propose in order for the US to make progress on the short to medium-term arms control and disarmament measures outlined above and move towards zero. This includes a consideration of the economic, social and political drivers of nuclear possession. I then move on to discuss the current health of US democracy and the state of prominent pro-disarmament actors and groups, both as a means of developing the concept of *institutional democratisation* in relation to the range of US

institutions involved in the management and reproduction of nuclear weapons and imagining how the current political obstacles to disarmament may be overcome.

Beginning with pro-disarmament critiques of the US nuclear weapons establishment, one prominent approach argues that the power and privilege of the US's military-industrial complex (MIC) needs to be confronted and diminished if the US is to make progress on disarmament. For example, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2014) define the MIC as the:

policy and monetary relationships between legislators, national armed forces, and the so-called "defence" industry (aka war profiteers). These relationships include political contributions, political approval for expenditure on weapons and war, lobbying to support bureaucracies, and oversight of the industry.

It is therefore worth briefly investigating the notion of the MIC, considering its utility as a concept, for example, in relation to how different actors and institutions reproduce the US nuclear weapon system and block action supportive of nuclear disarmament.

Analysts such as Andrew Lichterman argue that the various actors and groups

forming the MIC in the US have strong economic, political and ideological interests in maintaining the nation's nuclear weapons system. He thus notes that the 'still-considerable economic and political power of the immense nuclear weapons complex and associated elements of the aerospace-military-industrial complex' forms 'a national web of institutions that continues to deploy an array of ideological and institutional techniques to sustain their flow of tax dollars' (Lichterman, 2012: 91).

The financial rewards associated with the production of nuclear arms today and historically are indeed enormous. Stephen Schwarz (2012) has estimated that the US spent \$8.7 trillion on its nuclear forces between 1940 and 2010. Estimates on the cost of US nuclear weapons today vary, mainly due to the difficulty in collating reliable information. For example, in 2005, the Government Accountability Office (2005) reported that even the DoD itself did not know the exact cost of the nuclear arsenal.

Despite this, a 2012 report by the Ploughshares Fund (2012) estimated that the US would spend \$640 billion on 'nuclear weapons and related programs' over the next decade, whilst a 2013 study by the Congressional Budget Office (2013) estimated that the US plans to spend \$355 billion over the next decade on maintaining and modernising its nuclear arsenal. According to a recent report by the James Martin Center (Wolfstahl et al: 2014), the DoD and the NNSA plan to spend approximately \$1 trillion on nuclear weapons projects over the next 30 years, though more recent

estimates claim that this could rise by 50% owing to inflation (Reif, 2017).

Scholars such as Noam Chomsky have outlined the wider significance of the huge costs of nuclear weapons. For Chomsky (1989: 185) and other critics, such as Chalmers Johnson (2008), the production of these weapons is a prime example of 'military Keynesianism', which involves the state heavily subsidising private industry with public money for the production of, in this case, military hardware—which it then buys—as the sole consumer in the case of nuclear weapons. Indeed, Lichterman (2012: 102) describes how military spending has been 'one of the few forms of government industrial policy capable of gaining any consistent consensus' across the US political system. The US nuclear weapon system, as part of the MIC, or what Chomsky (1993) prefers to call the 'Pentagon system', is thus criticised on the grounds that it not only socialises the cost and risk of developing hi-tech military equipment whilst privatising profits, but also robs the US people of vital resources that could be invested in goods, services and infrastructure fulfilling basic human needs.

Elsewhere, scholars such as Greg Mello of Los Alamos Study Group and William Hartung of the Center for International Policy have produced analyses to explain nuclear weapons decision-making within the nuclear establishment and the forces behind the rocketing budgets. In doing so, their work helps us address some of the political questions left unanswered by proposals (as outlined in section 3.2 above) that the US move to minimum deterrence. As Hartung (2012: 4) states, for example,

making 'sensible cuts' to the US's nuclear arsenal will require policy makers to 'take on the money, power and influence of the nuclear weapons lobby'.⁴⁶

His 2012 study, *Bombs Versus Budgets: Inside the Nuclear Weapons Lobby* explains how the main nuclear weapons contractors in the US give large sums of money to members of Congress who sit on 'the four key subcommittees with jurisdiction over nuclear weapons spending'. The purpose of these donations, Hartung suggests, is in order for the nuclear weapons lobby to 'either collaborate to promote higher nuclear weapons spending or compete for their share of a shrinking pie' (Ibid). The US's continued possession of and investment in a sizable nuclear arsenal is of particular importance to these companies as they have become, to varying degrees, 'dependent' on such government contracts for income. Several contractors, such as Babcock and Wilcox, Bechtel, Honeywell, Northrup Grumman and Lockheed Martin are also involved in 'more than one major nuclear weapons-related project' (Ibid: 8).⁴⁷

Hartung's study is very valuable in explaining how corporate interests influence

⁴⁶ For Hartung (2012: 4), this lobby comprises the 'individuals and institutions that benefit from the nuclear status quo, including corporations involved in designing and building nuclear delivery vehicles; companies that operate nuclear warhead-related facilities; and members of Congress with nuclear weapons-related facilities or deployments in their states or districts.'

⁴⁷ As well as lobbying and political donations, Hartung (2012: 13) documents the 'revolving door' between the defence industry and government, whereby the 'top 14 nuclear weapons contractors employ 137 lobbyists who formerly worked for key nuclear weapons decision makers'. This is done, he suggests, both because former government employees may receive 'special treatment' for their current firms from their erstwhile colleagues and because current government officials may not wish to upset potential future employers by striking hard bargains over procurement decisions.

Congress in order to gain lucrative nuclear weapons-related contracts. In terms of the hierarchy of power on these issues, however, it is important to note that Congress, whilst an important player, has a limited reach. For example, Ritchie (2008: 10) argues that, despite having the 'power of the purse' so that it can remove or increase funding for a programme, Congress should be considered a 'junior partner in nuclear weapons policy-making'. He goes on to argue that this is because 'the administration dominates nuclear weapons policy by setting the agenda through its control over information and expertise and relatively few members of Congress have considerable knowledge of and interest in nuclear weapons issues' (Ibid). Yet, as we have seen, whilst administrations come and go, 'imperial grand strategy' and the 'permanent bureaucracies' that refine and implement the nuclear weapons plans associated with 'full spectrum dominance' remain firmly entrenched in the halls of US state power.

With regards to the DoE and NNSA, Mello (2014) reports that in March 2014, the White House asked for 'a 7% increase over current-year spending', amounting to \$8.6billion for nuclear warhead research and production, which was 'significantly more than Ronald Reagan did in 1985, the Cold War's highest peak for design, testing, and production, in constant dollars.' Mello and Hill (2006: 4) describe how the DoE is now the 'most privatized federal department', with 94% of its expenditure going to a 'handful' of contractors in 2004. This situation leads these authors to conclude that 'it is now hard to tell where government ends and where the corporations which comprise and profit from its activities begin', describing these

corporations as ‘parastatal’ but, crucially, not subject to any sort of democratic accountability. Indeed, the general lack of accountability and transparency surrounding the US’s nuclear weapons system makes it very difficult to ascertain its true cost. The opaque nature of the system is thus clearly a significant barrier to democratic deliberation and participation in decision-making concerning nuclear matters and something that needs to be rectified if there is to be democratic control of nuclear weapons pursuant to their elimination.

3.3.4 Nuclear disarmament in an era of democratic decline

In addition to looking at the specifics of US nuclear weapon decision-making, as part of the US’s global posture, and the top-down, secretive nature of decision-making in these areas, it is useful to contextualise such processes within the general US political system to, for example, compare how the conduct of nuclear politics relates to wider political cultures and trends—including the present health of US democracy. In doing so, we may shed some light on the relationship between nuclear weapons decision-making and *institutional democratisation* and the obstacles to and opportunities for the latter in the US today.

Indeed, it is reasonable to suggest initially that the nature of US nuclear weapons policy making outlined above is just one example of the far-reaching influence of small groups of extremely powerful and wealthy individuals and corporations over

the US political system. Such concerns have led some scholars to question whether the US today can accurately be described as a functioning democracy. For example, Brenner (2013) claims the US is a 'plutocracy' whilst the results of Gilens and Page's (2014) investigation into which actors exert most influence over US public policy found 'substantial support for theories of Economic Elite Domination'. Elsewhere Sheldon Wolin (2010) describes the emerging political system as 'inverted totalitarianism' given the increasing power of an authoritarian state run by and for the rich and the decline of institutions capable of checking that power. It is therefore imperative to understand how the US's democratic decline and the rise of the plutocrats relates to and impacts on nuclear weapons decision-making if we are to properly appreciate the politics of nuclear disarmament today and the potential contribution *institutional democratisation* could make in this—and other—areas of US political life. This is also necessary given that, as we have seen, the majority of mainstream political analyses discussing US nuclear weapons tend to ignore or marginalise such concerns.

Moreover, when reviewing the publications of mainstream research groups, it is notable that they have quite a different view of the state of US democracy than the one presented above. For example, the Economist Intelligence Unit (2016), from 2006-2015, classified the US as a 'full democracy', before it was judged to have slipped to the rank of 'flawed democracy' in 2016. Elsewhere, a 2017 Freedom House (2017) report gave the US a score of 89/100 and classified it as in the first out of seven ranks for political rights and civil liberties. Such discrepancies between

critical and mainstream approaches should lead us to question the methodologies used by both sides to reach their results. For example, from an initial review of this literature it is not apparent that the gap between public opinion and government policy on nuclear matters outlined in section 3.2 is taken into account when formulating assessments of the health of US democracy. Chapter Eight will provide a fuller consideration of how such methodological discrepancies might be overcome by assessing the ways in which nuclear possession's impact on democratic processes might be measured.

Leaving aside such methodological questions for now, critics such as Chomsky (1992: 32) emphasise that the essential task of tackling the Pentagon System involves recognising that the problem is one of 'power and privilege' and 'specific institutional structures'. The scale of this challenge requires the construction of 'stable popular institutions' so that citizens can act to undermine the power of elites and participate fully in decision-making (Chomsky, 2002: 185). Without the emergence of strong popular forces, able to exert democratic control over key institutions, US global dominance will continue, threatening the survival of the species—*Hegemony or Survival*—as the title of Chomsky's 2003 study has it.

Elaine Scarry reaches similar conclusions in her 2014 work *Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing between Democracy and Doom*, where she argues that the US people must use the US Constitution as a tool to dismantle the US nuclear weapons system. For Scarry (2014: 13), in a similar fashion to Dahl and Deudney, the possession of nuclear

weapons has converted the US government into ‘a monarchic form of rule that places all defense in the executive branch of government’ leaving the population ‘incapacitated’. She goes on to argue that this dire situation is ‘radically incompatible’ with the US Constitution, firstly because that document requires a Congressional declaration of war and secondly, because of the ‘constitutional requirement that distributes to the entire adult population shared responsibility for use of the country’s arsenal’ (Ibid: 31). In response to this problem, Lindsay (1991: 170) argues for ‘decentralizing authority’ because Congress ‘should play an active role on nuclear weapons matters regardless of who occupies the White House’. Similarly, a recent report by the Ploughshares Fund (2016) outlines how the US can reduce its nuclear spending, reform its nuclear posture and restrain its nuclear war plans so that the nuclear button is controlled by Congress.⁴⁸

In terms of domestic forces that might attenuate the US’s march to nuclear weapons modernisation and help implement such reforms, Lichterman (2014: 24) argues that, at present, the ‘main obstacle’ is likely to be US military industries’ seeming inability to complete ‘ever-more complex manufacturing and industrial projects’. As we have seen, this is because of the ‘cost overruns and schedule delays’ which have blighted

⁴⁸ In this report, short-term reforms towards the democratic control and ultimate dismantlement of the US’s nuclear arsenal are outlined by Kennette Benedict (Ibid: 25), who writes that the incoming Trump administration should: ‘place our nuclear weapons on a much lower level of launch readiness, release to the public more information about the nuclear weapons in our own arsenals, include legislators and outside experts in its nuclear posture review and recognize Congress’ authority to declare war as a prerequisite to any use of nuclear weapons’.

programmes run by the NNSA, thus 'eroding congressional and military support' and causing this organisation 'to downscale or indefinitely defer' several projects. By contrast, Lichterman and his co-authors present domestic opposition to US nuclear weapons policies as very weak, with 'little debate' amongst the public on this issue and no real 'disarmament movement' to speak of (Ibid: 25).

Similarly, US-based activists Richard Falk and David Krieger (2012: 8) have spoken of the 'general complacency amongst the public', which, Falk states 'may be hiding an underlying despair, a turning away because it seems impossible to get rid of the weaponry'. Instead, Lichterman (2014: 25) argues that public discourse on nuclear weapons is 'dominated by specialists' who focus on proliferation to NNWS or non-state actors rather than on the risks posed by 'nuclear weapons held as central elements of national security policies in the hands of the world's most powerful states'.

The pessimism displayed by several prominent supporters of US nuclear disarmament regarding the potential role of the public and the relative strength of their movement is of no small significance. Firstly, as previously discussed in Chapter Two, such 'movement pessimism' may be expected from elites who generally malign, ignore or underestimate the potential of popular movements, but not necessarily from within the movements themselves (Nebel, 2012: 232). Secondly, polling data shows that, despite the impediments to understanding the issues at a substantive level, the US public supports a range of progressive action. This includes

adopting a more restrained and multilateralist approach to global affairs, reducing spending on the military—and nuclear weapons in particular—as well as nuclear arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. We might therefore draw an initial conclusion that supporters of nuclear disarmament should better study and learn from polling data, to, as the *US in the World* (2009) report suggests, take advantage of the constituencies of support that do exist and build upon them.

It is worth considering at this point the difference between the US disarmament movement of today and that of its peak in the 1980s, which saw in New York in 1982 the largest protest, at that time, in US history on the theme ‘Freeze the Arms Race-Fund Human Needs’ (Wittner, 2010). For Lichterman, the Freeze campaign was part of a ‘broader and deeper’ social movement than exists today, proposing disarmament but also critical of nuclear power and with strong analyses of political institutions.⁴⁹ The Freeze movement has been criticized by several disarmament activists such as Joseph Gerson for not being an abolition movement, but based around ‘removing the sense of fear’ regarding the US-Soviet arms race.⁵⁰ David S. Meyer’s *A Winter of Discontent* (1990: 221), which tells the story of the Freeze movement and analyses the politics of peace movements, also notes the way in which mainstream politicians co-opted and ‘demobilized’ the campaign, turning it into something ‘more moderate and less threatening to the bipartisan tradition of

⁴⁹ Interview: AL

⁵⁰ Interview: JG

arms control’.⁵¹

In the medium to long-term, the key challenge for opponents of the US’s nuclear weapon system is thus how to engage with and mobilise the public in order to lever out undemocratic and militarist forces from systems of governance and gain popular control over key institutions. There is not space to fully consider this question here, suffice to say that, in order for such movements to be built there needs to be a common understanding amongst politically active groups that nuclear disarmament requires the MIC or Pentagon System to be progressively dismantled as part of wider social, economic and political change. Moreover, whilst some degree of elite bargaining and coalition building may be necessary to develop legislation and highlight key issues, history suggests that disarmament activists need to be wary of politician’s own agendas if truly progressive policies are to be developed.

Conclusion

In terms of NWS nuclear disarmament, the preceding discussion has shown that we must recognise that the US sits in a category by itself given both the size and scale of its nuclear arsenal and its overall military power, which together exert a singular

⁵¹ As Meyer (1993: 467) explains, co-option by the government of the anti-nuclear movement had previously occurred when President Kennedy agreed the limited test ban treaty in 1963, which legitimated the establishment’s arms control measures and ‘effectively protected US nuclear policies from strong domestic criticism’.

influence on all other nation's strategic thought and thus their nuclear choices. Moreover, whilst less prevalent as a legitimating discourse today, US nuclear possession was, for most of the Cold War, justified in terms of the need to defend democracy in the ideological struggle against communism. For these reasons, it is clear that the main contention of this thesis—that *institutional democratisation*: i) has significant analytical value given the limitations of existing approaches to the politics of nuclear possession and disarmament ii) is necessary, on a practical level as a transformative political process, for NWS nuclear disarmament—will, to a great extent, stand or fall depending upon its applicability to the US case.

With regard to the former claim, this chapter found that the US nuclear weapons establishment is today embedded, at the domestic level, in a range of governmental and non-governmental economic, political and social institutions that have an interest in the bomb's continual reproduction. This interest has grown to be far deeper and more widespread than when it was originally formed, during the turbulent economic, social and political conditions of World War Two. The security model has most validity at this historical point, as the drive for the bomb emerged at a time when all of US society was geared towards defeating Nazi Germany.

The secretive and hierarchical nature of the bomb thus reflected the totalitarian nature of the US polity during this period, so that the US government was able to justify nuclear possession and its use against Japan with reference to the onerous demands of war and the imperative need for victory. Yet, as the critical literature

explains, rather than the US military establishment being downgraded after the war and nuclear possession being a temporary phenomenon—so that both became subject to democratic control and restraint—the Pentagon system and national security state grew in power whilst efforts at international management of the bomb failed. With such missed opportunities the nuclear revolution thus took on ominous new domestic and international meanings with the emergence of the Cold War.

For example, *institutional democratisation* explains how the entrenchment of the US's nuclear status had significant consequences for all aspects of US domestic political life. As Robert Dahl noted, the bomb was, from the beginning, a paradox even by the standards of official rhetoric since it was built to defend democracy but this project necessitated the suspension of democracy in important areas of government and the creation of a 'guardianship', or, for Deudney 'monarchy'. This paradoxical security paradigm continued and was indeed expanded over the course of the 20th century because the Cold War was framed at an official level as an ideological conflict involving the US defending its liberal and benign democracy against Soviet communism's evil empire. Governments on both sides thus used the Cold War as a means of managing their populations and legitimising the maintenance and growth of enormous military power, including nuclear arsenals. Moreover, as the US's military and nuclear might grew in line with its global ambitions, so did its influence and importance to the US economy and society. This made it particularly difficult for critics to challenge possession of the bomb, not least because defenders of the status quo could accuse their opponents of siding with the

ideological enemy—a particularly potent means of protecting their own domestic interests.

However, nuclear technology, whilst ensuring significant levels of unaccountable power for small groups of domestic elites, soon came to threaten the very survival of the US as it spread to the Soviet Union, and beyond. Moreover, nuclear possession was and is—as both critical authors such as Meyer, Ellsberg as well as several of the other mainstream analysts reviewed above note—important for US power projection as part of its global strategic posture, including its extended deterrence relationships in Europe and East Asia, to ensure world order is run in accordance with US interests. Yet neither of these points are considered by the security model, which principally frames nuclear acquisition as a necessary and rational response to external threats. Critical approaches such as *institutional democratisation* thus better explain why the US's nuclear weapons complex not only survived but was modernised following the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the US's main strategic opponent.

Other limitations of the mainstream and realist literature were shown, as the potential, but unfulfilled, domestic sources of international cooperation on nuclear arms control and disarmament action to be found amongst the US public were identified. To develop this point, the utility of *institutional democratisation* as a theory of change in relation to the US case needs to be more clearly outlined so we may usefully speculate on how the US may make progress on its nuclear

disarmament responsibilities.

Before doing this we must specify what these responsibilities entail. The US—like all other NWS parties to the NPT—has two clear international obligations regarding nuclear disarmament, namely, it must eliminate its nuclear arsenal and act in ways that support other state's ability to eliminate theirs. Unlike other NWS, the US is a superpower, the sole superpower in fact, with an array of economic, military and political capabilities that together comprise a level of power without precedent in world history. Despite not being able to present here a full comparative analysis of NWS strategic power, we may reasonably propose that the US has a particularly great responsibility to act in ways supportive of its dual disarmament responsibilities, given both the size and lethality of the US's arsenal and the crucial role US foreign policy often plays in shaping other state's nuclear weapons decision-making.

This proposal itself suggests that it is not only useful but essential to differentiate between NWS in terms of their responsibility for nuclear disarmament—an idea that does not exist in mainstream approaches such as *cooperation with disarmament*. Moreover, this chapter outlined the many unilateral disarmament actions the US could take outside of arrangements involving significant cooperation with other nations, which mainly means Russia and China. When it comes to bilateral and multilateral disarmament processes the US has a particular responsibility to boost cooperation in relation to nuclear disarmament action in numerous ways, beginning

with strategic restraint involving military technology and the threat and use of force.

However, in the post-Cold War era successive US administrations, despite much rhetoric about the desirability of a NFWF, have failed to live up to these responsibilities. Instead, democratic processes have been disregarded, with decisions regarding nuclear weapons use concentrated in the hands of the President, significant support given to allies' nuclear weapons programmes, and the will of the US public on nuclear weapons issues largely ignored. International law and the UN Charter, meanwhile, have repeatedly been sidelined in favour of military build-ups and overseas aggression. Importantly, the US public have been persuaded that huge state intervention in the economy through massive military spending—much of which goes into private hands—is necessary to protect their nation from dangerous overseas threats. The US government's behaviour, at home and abroad, consciously increases threats to national security, yet whilst decision-makers are aware of the consequences of their policies they prefer to discuss how to counter the threats they've helped create rather than considering alternatives to militarism. Such alternatives and the causes of insecurity are therefore largely absent from the mainstream discourse, which instead tends to repeat the narratives of the powerful. The result is a self-fulfilling prophecy as defenders of the status quo and an even more powerful military, use the spread of WMD and the threat of terrorism to generate an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty in order to justify expansionist policies.

Taken as a whole, the US's government's policies have thus severely impeded progress on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, both because its quest for hegemony and full spectrum dominance provokes other nations into seeking or retaining the bomb and because the US has greatly accelerated the spread of nuclear weapons internationally by supporting the nuclear programmes of its allies. In doing so, the US has substantially increased the possibility that someday someone will use nuclear weapons, whether by accident, miscalculation, madness or design. This finding also leads us to conclude that there is no 'security dilemma' here for NWS such as China and Russia as they have understood the US's strategic intent—based on the significant degree of continuity exhibited by the US's behaviour post-1945. These and other nations therefore prioritise self-defence against a potential US attack, within which nuclear deterrence plays a central role.

Consequently, there is a particularly long list of measures the US could unilaterally take to begin fulfilling its obligations under the NPT, in order to both eliminate its own nuclear arsenal and create the conditions whereby other NWS are able to do so. These unilateral actions should be implemented first as progress on them would make it much easier to take forward other co-operative bilateral and/or multilateral measures between NWS. In the medium to long term, efforts both to eliminate the US's nuclear weapons and transform US foreign policy in line with domestic and international law require challenging the deep-rooted institutions and interests of the MIC/Pentagon System. However, supporters of the permanent war economy have not only resisted efforts to reduce its role in society but have promoted its

growth in recent years so that military spending now dwarfs that of the Reagan administration at the height of the Cold War whilst the cost of the US's nuclear weapons system is expected to grow substantially over the next twenty years as the triad is modernised.

These developments are partly due to the relative weakness of current oppositional forces, in particular the nuclear disarmament movement in the US and globally. A key obstacle to building such movements is the secrecy and misinformation that surrounds nuclear weapons. For example, despite the strength and openness of the US's formally democratic institutions the vast majority of the US public is not aware of how their leaders use nuclear weapons so that whilst there is significant opposition to current policies—such as first use—this does not translate into political pressure for change. Moreover, research shows that the US public also generally supports progressive action towards nuclear disarmament and has historically succeeded in pressuring Washington into arms control agreements. In addition, there has been a lively debate within elite circles regarding the value of nuclear possession, with prominent figures such as William Perry and General George Lee Butler advocating nuclear abolition. Despite these positive factors, there exists a sense of 'movement pessimism' or scepticism in the US nuclear disarmament movement about the potential role the public could play in these areas, which may prevent popular forces being used effectively to realise the movement's goals.

In terms of opportunities for nuclear disarmament action then, harnessing public

opinion is key if decision-makers are to be held accountable to domestic and international law and Congress and the President are to be empowered to take progressive action on these issues. Whilst the *guardianship* model of arms control and disarmament has been shown to have a limited impact, collaborating with nuclear sceptics from the US establishment could provide political benefits amongst certain constituencies. Moreover, if a democratic peace is indeed to be realised, means must be found to democratise, ideally in a permanent form, the US state if it is to persuade other nations of its peaceful intentions and mitigate their fear and uncertainty, particularly given its singular military might and record of power projection.

Chapter Four: Russia

Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth investigation of the causes and consequences of Russian nuclear possession and disarmament, in order to further assess the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation* alongside other approaches. Chapter Eight then contextualises Russia's responsibility for disarmament action alongside the other NWS and makes appropriate conclusions and recommendations. This case study proceeds in several sections, beginning with a summary of how the mainstream and realist approaches explored in Chapter Two relate to Russia's particular experience as a NWS and how Russia has officially justified its nuclear status over time. This is principally done by placing Russia's development of nuclear weapons within the context of relevant historical events from the mid to late 20th and early 21st century—focusing, in particular, on the Cold War.

The next section begins the process of showing how Russia's nuclear experience illustrates the limitations of the previously reviewed mainstream and realist approaches and the extent to which *institutional democratisation* helps us better understand the causes and consequences of Russian nuclear possession and disarmament. Reviewing alternate perspectives on post-World War Two history in these sections is useful in explaining how international developments interacted

with the Soviet Union / Russia's domestic politics and how this interaction led to the rapid expansion of its nuclear weapons establishment. In addition, it is important to consider what opportunities have existed for Russia to adopt an alternative, non-nuclear approach to security (such as during the Gorbachev era and the end of the Cold War), assess what opportunities exist today and imagine how democratic movements might take advantage of such openings in the future.

Whilst the security model is right to emphasise how Russia's external threat perceptions drove its original decision to acquire the bomb, we also need to consider the contribution of domestic factors, such as how the militarised and totalitarian nature of the post-WW2 Soviet polity facilitated the rapid development of the bomb and worked to prevent disarmament. Moreover, as the Russian nuclear arsenal grew over the course of the Cold War, the bomb took on important domestic economic, social and political meanings, including as a way by which successive regimes could legitimate their rule.

Today, although Russia's nuclear deterrent strategy is driven by its relations with the US—and, to a lesser extent, China—it is similarly necessary to look at how the international and the domestic levels interact to shape Russia's nuclear politics and the extent to which the adoption of alternative security postures and arrangements by the other NWS might enable Russia to move towards a more liberal and democratic polity and achieve nuclear disarmament. In order to do this, the main body of this chapter investigates the various economic, political and social drivers of

Russian nuclear possession in the post-Cold War era, and outlines the changing role and importance of nuclear weapons in Russia's domestic and international politics. In addition, I discuss the obstacles to and opportunities for *institutional democratisation* pursuant to nuclear disarmament today, considering the current state of Russian public opinion and civil society engagement in nuclear matters in relation to Russia's authoritarian political model.

Given the history and scale of the Russian nuclear arsenal, this chapter is of a similar length to that of the US chapter. In addition, I have endeavoured where possible to avoid repeating points concerning the two nation's Cold War rivalry and continuing adversarial relations. Important differences between the two case studies to note at the outset, which affect the size and character of the chapter, concern Russia's regime type and overall strategic power. Regarding the former point, many assessments of Russia's political system consider it to be lacking in essential qualities necessary for a democracy and therefore cast it as authoritarian and illiberal. Several scholarly and other expert studies have also portrayed Russia as moving further and further away from democracy towards authoritarianism over the course of the 2000s as a result of President Vladimir Putin's rule.

It would appear that the opportunities for *institutional democratisation* in this case are far more limited than in the US because Russia begins from a less conducive starting point. Yet there is also evidence showing that the Russian people support progressive action being taken on arms control and disarmament. These findings

raise the question, which I shall examine below, of the extent to which the *guardianship* model of nuclear arms control and disarmament may be more appropriate and practical for Russia's political circumstances, at least in the short to medium term. In addition, there is the issue of Russian resistance to perceived Western meddling in its domestic affairs and those of states in its near abroad. Thus, any sense that external forces are acting to impose Western-style democracy will be strongly opposed, as was seen when Moscow accused the US of interfering in Eastern European nations by supporting opposition movements during the 'Colour Revolutions' in the 2000s. This raises another question, which I explore below: if nuclear disarmament requires *institutional democratisation*, how might the conditions arise internally, in the medium to long term, whereby Russia moves away from authoritarianism and towards democracy?

4.1 Mainstream and realist perspectives on the causes and consequences of Russian nuclear possession and disarmament

To begin with, it is necessary to again note that the mainstream and realist works reviewed in Chapter Two mainly focus on US nuclear politics and strategy—and do so most of the time in terms of how an attack by the Soviet Union / Russia against the US or its allies could be credibly deterred. Far less space is therefore given over in these works to the Russian nuclear experience or the world as viewed from Moscow. Despite this, it is possible to apply the principles and ideas underlying the approaches reviewed in Chapter Two to Russia, for example, by studying how

Russian strategic analysts have applied realist and other approaches in their work. In doing so we may observe what may be termed Russian perspectives on realist approaches to international relations, some of which mirror the descriptions and prescriptions of arguments promoting US interests. As previously noted, whilst these historical perspectives differ as a whole from those that are more compatible with *institutional democratisation*, there are also several apparent areas of factual agreement and overlap, for example, concerning the importance of strategic stability.

Realist explanations of the origins of the Soviet nuclear programme focus on the threat posed by the US. Thus, as David Holloway (2012: 377) argues, Stalin's decision to acquire the bomb was taken two weeks after the US bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, because he saw the 'use of the bomb as an anti-Soviet move designed to deprive the Soviet Union of strategic gains in the Far East and more generally to give the United States the upper hand in defining the postwar settlement'. Moscow thereafter devoted immense resources to a crash program that allowed a bomb to be tested in 1949—several years earlier than predicted by US intelligence (Ibid: 378). This was done, as Craig and Radchenko (2008: 97) explain, in order to strengthen the USSR's bargaining position and great-power claims by ending the US nuclear monopoly. Yet in reports such as the US State Department's NSC-68 (1950), the Soviet acquisition of the bomb was framed as an essential part of the USSR's 'hostile designs' to spread Communism around the world. Moscow's 'formidable power' thus presented 'the gravest threat to the security of the United States' (Ibid). Such

assessments of Soviet aims inform traditionalist Western perspectives on the Cold War, which emphasise the USSR's expansionist ambitions and military strength. In such accounts, generally speaking, domestic political factors are not ignored so much as they tend to play a lesser role.

After Stalin's death, Soviet strategy followed US policy in key areas, with conventional forces cut back and, Holloway (2012: 386) argues, 'increasing emphasis on nuclear weapons and on ballistic missiles as the means to deliver them'. Thereafter, as retired Russian General Vladimir Belous explains,

there emerged an approximate balance between both sides in strategic offensive weapons that contributed naturally to strategic stability and the concept of nuclear deterrence based on the central model of mutual assured destruction (MAD) that has never lost its topicality (Blank ed., 2011: 138).

Such 'topicality' was again shown in 2015 when US General Joseph Dunford stated that 'Russia presents the greatest threat to our national security' (CNN, 2015). This statement, representing apparent continuity with the US's Cold War strategic assessments, is redolent of a significant section of contemporary mainstream Western thinking regarding Russia and its position in the international state system. According to this viewpoint, proposed by analysts such as Fiona Hill and Steven Pifer (2016) of the Brookings Institution and Julianne Smith and Adam Twardowski (2017)

of the Center for a New American Century, the aggressive and obstructive nature of the current Kremlin regime is the major obstacle to reducing tensions and building stability across the Euro-Atlantic area. Moreover, senior figures such as former NATO head Anders Fogh Rasmussen argue that Russia military power and provocative actions abroad must be contained and that the West must communicate its determination to act forcefully should Moscow cross its red lines (Khan, 2016).

US and NATO forces, meanwhile, are officially presented as democratic, peaceful and benign so that expansion to the borders of Russia by the military alliance is non-threatening (NATO, 2017). According to NATO, therefore, there is no security dilemma for Moscow, and the alliance's expansion is legitimate because former Warsaw Pact and other Eastern European nations actively want to join it. Moreover, advanced military capabilities such as BMD deployed in Europe—the Alliance argues—should not trouble Moscow as they are aimed at dealing with threats from elsewhere (Ibid). Whilst accounts emphasising the West's peaceful, liberal and benign character are common, it must be recognised that there is a debate amongst Western policy experts regarding the West's relations with Russia and how best to respond to the Putin regime.⁵² Either way, the explanation for adversarial relations

⁵² For example, Mearsheimer (2014) places the blame for the Ukraine crisis at the West's door owing to NATO's unwarranted expansion, so that Russian nuclear deterrence is an inevitable result. Others, particularly those more closely entwined with NATO, such as Lord Peter Ricketts (2016), advised against Washington making 'a deal with Putin which involves, for instance, pulling back on the forward basing of US forces in eastern Europe, or no further Nato enlargement'. Similarly, General Sir Richard Shirreff formerly NATO's deputy supreme commander in Europe, urged that the alliance must increase even further its military presence in the Baltic states if conflict—and nuclear war—with Moscow is to be avoided (Cooper, 2016).

remains focused on the strategic balance between Russia and the West at the international level.

Russian experts have additionally argued that changes to the international scene are essential for progress on nuclear disarmament between Moscow and Washington. In the background of Russia's strategic calculus also lies nuclear-armed China, with which Russia shares an extensive border. Thus, notably, a 2010 article entitled 'Start a new disarmament plan' by the Russian 'gang of four' Yevgeny Primakov, Mikhail Moiseyev, Igor Ivanov and Evgeny Velikhov (2010), argued that in the long-term, a 'world without nuclear weapons is not our existing world minus nuclear weapons' but that this endeavor necessitated 'a thorough overhaul of the entire international system' that included the construction of a 'reliable mechanism for peaceful settlement of major and local international and border conflicts'.⁵³

Russia's determination to retain its great power status—seen by the Kremlin as having been shamefully lost in the 1990s—is thus a significant problem for disarmament efforts today. Evidence of these ambitions can be found in the recent Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2013), which outlines how the nation has 'a special responsibility for maintaining security in the world both on the global and regional levels'. Russia pursues its goals via a 'multi-vector policy', which

⁵³ Yevgeny Primakov is a former Russian Prime Minister, Mikhail Moiseyev a retired Army General, Igor Ivanov a former Russian Foreign Minister and Evgeny Velikhov—a prominent Russian physicist.

includes giving a central role to the United Nations and the development of a multipolar world order based on 'international law and principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs of states' (Ibid).

Whilst a level playing field is called for at the international level, so that Russia sits as an equal at the top table of diplomacy, democratic principles are not applied at home. Given the authoritarian nature of the ruling elite, the domestic causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament are thus not considered in official or expert analysis, so that the only scenario entertained is one where Moscow ascends once again to international parity with the US. This realist approach is informed by a rejection of the 'new thinking' developed by former premier Mikhail Gorbachev and his circle at the end of the Cold War. Mikhail Tyspkin (2009: 787) links the rejection of Gorbachev by contemporary Russian elites to their 'pursuit of great power status'. This urge, he claims, did not start with Putin, but materialised soon after the USSR's fall in 1991, when 'a consensus emerged across the range of Russian elites that (1) Gorbachev's 'new thinking', which discounted the use of different types of power in international relations, had failed, and (2) Russia's natural role in the international system is that of a major power.' The memory of both the failure and betrayal of the Gorbachev years, where significant strategic concessions were made to the West without adequate reciprocation, and the Yeltsin presidency, where Russia is remembered as being disgracefully weak, are of particular importance in understanding the nationalism alive in Russia today.

As things currently stand, the Kremlin is therefore strongly resistant to nuclear disarmament, so that whilst it publicly endorses the goal of nuclear zero, this is regarded as such a long-term aspiration as to be impractical. As Nikolai Sokov (2011: 188) explains, when President Putin signed a law in 2010 on funding for upgrading the nuclear weapons complex he mentioned that the country would need its arsenal for the next '30-40-50 years'. Moreover, democratisation—those from the Russian establishment might well argue—whether in pursuit of disarmament or other initiatives, is misguided given the evidence suggesting that the Russian public strongly supports the nation's nuclear status and foreign policy under Putin more widely. For example, a 2006 poll indicated that 76% of respondents believed that Russia 'needs nuclear weapons', with over 50% considering nuclear weapons to be the main guarantee of security (Akhtamzyan, 2006). Sceptics may therefore, reasonably, use such data to support their claim that the domestic political barriers to nuclear disarmament in Russia are too high for this project to succeed in the near future. Given that nuclear weapons are one of the main currencies through which Moscow seeks to maintain its international standing, the process of devaluing these weapons is thus particularly challenging. This is also because proposals put forward by Russian experts almost exclusively place arms control and disarmament measures within a bilateral or multilateral framework involving an incremental step-by-step approach (the 'P5' process), managed by the NWS.

4.2 Critical perspectives on the causes and consequences of Russian nuclear possession and disarmament

In terms of the applicability of critical approaches and the domestic politics model to this case study, it is useful to begin with the question of regime type. Following the 1917 revolution Russia transitioned from an absolutist and autocratic monarchy to a self-proclaimed socialist republic. However, soon after any democratic element of the revolution was purged as Lenin and then Stalin implemented a brutal dictatorship (Fitzpatrick, 2008: 41). Dahl (1989: 53) argues that Lenin's leadership of the Bolshevik party created a type of guardianship that had a 'unique...claim to rule', namely, in the interests of the proletariat. As WW2 progressed the importance of atomic power became clear, stimulated by Stalin's desire for military strength to influence events on the world stage. Connected to this, Craig and Radchenko (2008: 165) argue, was Stalin's mistrust of the West, which was part of 'a long-standing tradition'. There was thus no security dilemma for the Kremlin or taste for cooperation because it only saw continuity in Western policy, so that after WW2 it was 'beseiged by a capitalist world bent on destroying it' (Ibid).

The man put in charge of the Soviet nuclear programme was Lavrenti Beria—a close associate of Stalin. Despite the devastation of wartime, Beria created, according to Alexander Vershinin (2017), 'a super-ministry with enormous resources and emergency powers' which eventually became 'a new industrial sector...in the space of a few years - the atomic industry'. Holloway (2012: 396) notes that as time passed

the atomic and defense industries and military in the Soviet Union 'became increasingly influential in the formulation of policy,' in a way similar to the process that took place in the US.

For Sergey Koulik (1991: 125), policies 'formulated under conditions of wartime emergency' gradually turned into 'a routine process of catching-up' i.e. with US military strength. The USSR's 'military-industrial machine' was thus imbued with 'a strong momentum which was geared towards the pursuit of military competition for years to come' (Ibid: 139). Whilst there was some truth in Soviet propaganda efforts that the bomb was a defensive measure to ward off imperialist aggression from the West, this narrative also hid the domestic reality of Soviet society, which was stuck in the 'inertia of the military machine' (Ibid: 140). Moscow and Washington's Cold War rhetoric therefore presented a mirror image of the other side—with both claiming that their bomb was peaceful whilst the opponent's symbolised only nefarious intent. Such propagandising was routinely deployed at home and internationally. For the Kremlin, the bomb was a scientific and technological triumph that boosted its prestige, yet the Soviet leadership also felt the need to present its new weapon on the international stage as a symbol of peace and emphasise their preference for disarmament (Barghoorn, 1964: 111).

Whilst the USSR tried to cultivate a positive image in the eyes of world public opinion and respond to criticisms of its foreign policy, domestically there was no need for such efforts. Thus, as April Carter (1989: 26) explains, the absence of 'any direct popular or legislative pressure' on the Kremlin during the Cold War on arms control

policies meant the Soviet leadership was never held accountable on this issue and also did not feel pressure to rein in its military programmes. Yet this situation changed following Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985. Bruce Russett (2011: 99) makes the point that the 'internal character of the Soviet system moved importantly towards democracy during the 1986-1989 period.' According to Alexei Arbatov (2010: 54-55), this development ushered in a 'golden age' of 'civilian control and democratic accountability in their peculiar Soviet reforms' whereby academics and experts were involved in policymaking, including 'the major disarmament endeavours of the time'. Arbatov credits this movement—with Gorbachev's support—for taming the military establishment, enabling the agreement of the 1987 INF Treaty, the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and START I.⁵⁴ Moreover, David Cortright (2008: 150) claims that Gorbachev and the European peace movements should be credited for 'demanding political change', which led to the Soviets offering 'sweeping nuclear reductions' including the elimination of all nuclear weapons at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit.

Matthew Evangelista (1999: 306) embellishes on these points in highlighting how the real significance of Gorbachev's administration was the realisation that Soviet actions, which were intended as defensive, at times appeared threatening to the West—even to those who 'were sensitive to Soviet security interests' such as

⁵⁴ Today the INF is under threat as the US and Russia trade allegations that each has violated the treaty by developing new missile systems, with Russia threatening to withdraw (Ghoshal, 2014).

‘members of European peace movements’. This influenced the shift in Soviet foreign policy towards ‘common security’ as outlined in the Palme Commission report (1982), which advocated international cooperation to achieve complete and general disarmament and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Andrei Grachev (2008: 38) meanwhile, emphasises how Gorbachev was also one of a new generation of political leaders who ‘were not prepared to accept uncritically the unlimited demands of the military-industrial complex, especially at a time when it had begun to devour vital parts of the body of Soviet society’.⁵⁵ The MIC had, by the late 1970s, ‘gained a position of almost unrestrained domination of the political and economic life of the country’, making it immune from political control. Importantly, particularly given our previous discussion of the influence of the MIC/Pentagon System in US nuclear weapons decision-making, Grachev also concludes that ‘the two superpowers’ engaged in the arms race as they were ‘obviously motivated more by a common interest in preserving the status quo (including the positions of their respective military lobbies and industrial complexes) than by real defence concerns’. The preceding analysis suggests that the principal significance of Gorbachev for this study was his attempt to exert political control over nuclear weapons decision-making, hitherto dominated by military-industrial interests. Moreover, his brand of ‘new thinking’ prioritised disarmament as a means to reorient the Soviet economy away from military spending in order to provide more and better goods and services

⁵⁵ Grachev was former Deputy Head of the International Department of the Communist Party's Central Committee and a confidant of Gorbachev.

for its citizens and to reduce tensions with the West on the path to international cooperation between nations (Grachev, 2008).

David Cortright (2008: 323) argues that Gorbachev's strategic concessions and sweeping economic and political reforms in tandem with the popular movements in Eastern and Western Europe presented a golden opportunity to realise nuclear disarmament and build 'more reliable structures of peace and international cooperation'. Instead, Cortright (Ibid: 149) contends that the theory of 'cold war triumphalism', whereby military power broke the Soviet economy, embedded itself in US strategic thinking. This led to a series of actions by the US that, Russian analysts argue, pushed their country into a corner and increasingly led to a reliance on the military and nuclear weapons for security as the 1990s wore on. For example, the authors of the Russian Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) study *Russia and the Dilemmas of Nuclear Disarmament* (Arbatov et al, 2012: 97-102) state that the continued existence of NATO as a military alliance following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the incorporation of former pact members into NATO and the latter's subsequent expansion—breaking 'commitments previously undertaken at the highest level'—treated Russia like a 'loser' in the Cold War and took advantage of its weakness for Western gain.

Thus, whilst there was an opening for strategic cooperation and the development of a security community between the West and Russia following the end of the Cold War, symbolised by Gorbachev's (1989) proposal for a 'common European home',

this withered away as the US preferred enlargement to restraint. Western policies during the 1990s and 2000s presented a series of crises and serious challenges for US-Russian relations. As I shall explore in more detail in section 4.3, this led to an increasing Russian reliance on nuclear weapons in their defence and foreign policy. Several Russian analysts note that this situation was not inevitable but a result of changes in Russia's domestic affairs and international position. Understanding the process by which Russian international policy is made helps us appreciate how and why such a shift occurred. For example, as Gvosdev and Marsh (2014: xiii) note, there are different 'sectors and vectors' within Russia that create various foreign policies. External developments therefore may weaken or strengthen the ability of different sub-national actors and groups to realise their policy preferences. For example, in the years following the end of the Cold War more conservative actors have been strengthened, leading to a revived Russian nationalism. This is significant for the claim that *institutional democratisation* is necessary for nuclear disarmament because states with influence over Russian actions, such as the US, need to consider how their actions impact on Russian domestic politics—either supporting or undermining the prospects for military restraint and liberal democratic reforms.

To argue that the West should be more sensitive in its dealings with Russia if it wants a more liberal and cooperative regime in Moscow is not to absolve the latter for its part in obstructing democratisation and disarmament nor to place all the responsibility for the status quo at the West's door. As Lilia Shevtsova (Blank ed., 2012) argues, the main aim of the Russian political system at home is for ruling elites

to maintain their monopoly of power. Nuclear weapons are thus a part of the regime's survival strategy, so that, as Dmitri Trenin (2005: 7) argues, since the end of the Cold War, in Russian domestic politics, 'control over nuclear weapons has become the ultimate symbol of presidential authority, an equivalent of the old-time scepter and the orb'.

Despite these observations, Western studies of Russian nuclear politics rarely investigate domestic political dynamics in that nation. This may partly be due to the relative difficulty in finding appropriate and useful source material, compared to Western societies. It may also be partly down to the—not unreasonable—assumption that political forces outside the Kremlin are of minimal importance given the degree of centralised control over security matters and the nuclear issue in particular. There may also be an assumption that the Russian public aren't fully conscious politically and blindly accept Kremlin policy. For example, the Economist Intelligence Unit (2016), from 2006-2015, classified Russia as an 'authoritarian' state, whilst a 2017 Freedom House (2017) report gave Russia a score of 20/100 and classified it as in the bottom of seven ranks for political rights and in the second to last rank for civil liberties. Yet examining the preferences of the Russian public concerning security issues is vital if we are to familiarise ourselves with the potential for progressive change.

As noted in the previous section, in addition to the consensus on foreign and security policy amongst decision-makers, some evidence suggests that the Russian public

strongly supports the nation's nuclear status. Furthermore, according to one Russian military expert I interviewed, 'alternative voices are present but negligible, nearly anonymous'.⁵⁶ Despite the difficult political environment, there are some Russian NGOs—with connections to Western partners—that continue to work on these issues.⁵⁷ However, Pavel Podvig (2012) argues that the Russian public support for its government's nuclear weapons policies is largely:

a result of the lack of an open and informed discussion of national security priorities and policies that would involve independent voices. While there are non-governmental research organizations that are involved in the discussion of defence policies, there are no independent public organizations that would have nuclear weapons related issues on the agenda.

Whilst there is therefore significant evidence to suggest that there is strong support across Russian society for nuclear possession, as suggested above, it is also clear that this state of affairs was not inevitable but resulted from a particular set of conditions following the end of the Cold War. Moreover, apparently contradictory polling data suggests that there is strong support amongst the Russian public for arms control and disarmament. For example, a 2005 poll by VTsIOM showed that 39% of Russians supported nuclear reductions, but not to zero (Podvig, 2005). Similarly, a poll two

⁵⁶ Interview: IS

⁵⁷ These NGOs have some access to and influence with the foreign ministry, which is amenable to discussions on this topic (Tsypkin & Loukianova, 2009: 113-117).

years later reported strong support amongst the Russian public for deep cuts to the nation's arsenal—with 53% even favouring reductions below 400 nuclear weapons (World Public Opinion, 2007). However, a survey in 2010 by VTsIOM (RIA Novosti, 2010) struck a different note, as its polling showed that 60% of Russians opposed further reductions, with many believing New START had benefited the US more than Russia. Clearly these findings present a mixed picture of Russian attitudes to nuclear issues, suggesting a preference for reductions alongside a continuing interest in Russia remaining a nuclear possessor—a position influenced by a wariness of Western intentions and a preference for the nation to retain a semblance of great power status.

In terms of the medium to long-term changes required for Russia democratisation, Andreas Umland (2012) thus makes the point that:

Russia will become a law-ruled democracy when it stops seeing herself as a civilizational center engaged in a geopolitical struggle beyond her borders. Once the Russians discard the mirages of “The Third Rome” and imperial greatness, they will finally become free.

The argument that Russia's overblown ambitions need to be discarded if progressive and liberal reforms are to be realised raises several questions, which I discuss further below. These include whether the Russian people or Russian elites—or both—need

to embrace this shift in mindset, what a new Russian identity might look like, how such a shift may occur (for example, through civil society movements), and how such a transition connects to disarmament.

4.3 Russian nuclear politics in the post-Cold War world

In order to provide an overview of the different factors pushing and pulling Russia towards and away from reliance on nuclear weapons following the end of the Cold War, I will begin by outlining the former before turning to those developments potentially conducive to Russia reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in its security policy. The purpose of this investigation is to assess the theory that the underlying political relationship between Russia and the US has been the principal determinant of Russian dependence on nuclear weapons over the last two decades. In the following section I then consider the importance of other domestic, regional and international factors, and how they interact, as a means of assessing the explanatory value of *institutional democratisation* regarding Russian nuclear possession and disarmament.

As Dale Herspring (2011: 3) notes, Boris Yeltsin's term in office (1991-1999) was described as a time of 'confusion and chaos' for those in charge of Russia's armed forces. With the economy in freefall the resources available for conventional forces and nuclear weapons rapidly diminished, leading to Moscow's nuclear arsenal falling

to a level 4-4.5 times below its Cold War peak during this decade. Yet, as Nikolai Sokov (2002: 101) points out, whilst numbers were falling sharply, debate over the growing Russian reliance on nuclear weapons 'dominated the 1990s'. For Sokov, this reliance was not fixed but fluctuated according to regional and international political events, 'peaking' in response to a combination of four variables: i) acute perception of external threat ii) perceived absence of alternative means to ensure security iii) perception of high utility of nuclear weapons iv) cost-effective optimisation of military capability (Ibid. 105-106). On the other hand, Russian scholars such as Alexei Arbatov and Vladimir Dworkin (2005: 8) note that 'despite serious differences on some issues' during the 1990s and early 2000s there were also several constructive cooperative initiatives undertaken between Russia and the US.

According to several sources, Yeltsin had made overtures to NATO regarding potential Russian membership 'as a long-term political aim' in December 1991, but received no response (Friedman, 1991; Straus, 1997; Trenin, 2007: 71). Instead, as Eugene B. Rumer (2007: 18) posits, a weak Russia, transitioning from Soviet authoritarianism to democracy, was 'bypassed' by the West. At this time, western planners saw an opportunity to maximise their power, assuming that Russia would eventually acquiesce in the post-Cold War international order they were creating. Moreover, moves to expand NATO and 'secure Russia's periphery' would also ensure that if Russia re-emerged 'as a threat to Europe, as either a totalitarian or a failing state' that it could be contained (Ibid: 19). Recently, Russian aggression against Ukraine was used by US and British statespeople to justify the UK and other NATO

members maintaining their nuclear weapons to deter such 'adventurism' and the possibility of future 'nuclear blackmail' (BASIC, 2014; Scowcroft et al, 2014). This path was chosen despite warnings from a range of eminent US statespeople and political commentators, including George Kennan (Friedman, 1998) and Robert McNamara (Arms Control Association, 1997) that NATO expansion would lead to an adverse reaction in Russia and would constitute a 'policy error of historic proportions'.⁵⁸ Indeed, as Alexander Konovalov (Schell, 1998: 158) argued at the time, the result of these policies was that many Russians began to think that the US 'needs a weak, humbled Russia, perhaps as a source of cheap labor and raw materials'.

For their part, Russian military strategists responded to the far superior NATO conventional military forces they saw as threatening Russian borders in 1996-7 by emphasising the uses of tactical nuclear weapons (TNW), a development which 'propelled nuclear weapons into the center of attention and created a perception of their high utility' according to Sokov (2002: 103-4).⁵⁹ The next crisis between Russia and the West took place in 1999 with NATO's bombing of Serbia. Sokov (2011: 205) describes how a meeting of the Russian Federation Security Council during the Kosovo war, headed by Putin, decided to 'enhance reliance on nuclear weapons in a

⁵⁸ In June 1997 a group of fifty leading foreign policy experts, including former senators, retired military officers, diplomats and academicians sent an open letter to President Clinton expressing their opposition to NATO expansion (Arms Control Association, 1997).

⁵⁹ Elsewhere, Roger N. McDermott (2011: 71) has argued that the Russian Navy has been the main proponent in the armed forces of maintaining TNW, not least because they are viewed as 'as a necessary part of confronting the U.S. Navy in any conflict'.

departure from all documents adopted in the 1990s’.

The primary innovation at this time was the new mission given to nuclear forces—deterrence of limited conventional wars (Sokov, 2004). The significance for Russia of the Kosovo war and the subsequent invasion of Iraq in 2003 was that it showed how the US could use force without the authorisation of the United Nation’s Security Council. Moreover, Bill Clinton’s decision in 1999 to go ahead with a national missile defence system and amend the ABM Treaty accordingly was viewed by Moscow as evidence that Washington was seeking the ability to launch a large-scale attack or even gain a first-strike capability (Sokov, 2002: 104).

With Putin now the Russian President, the National Security Concept and the Military Doctrine of 2000 enshrined the new role of nuclear weapons outlined above. The reliance on nuclear weapons would be a temporary measure until conventional forces—particularly precision-guided munitions and missile defence—were developed (Sokov, 2011: 249). In this sense nuclear weapons were a cost-effective means of deterring NATO’s quantitatively and qualitatively stronger forces (Sokov, 2002: 105). Yet the many problems with conventional modernisation—frequent delays, corruption by officials, inadequate production equipment and skilled personnel—were at least as great as those with nuclear weapons, meaning that progress was far more sluggish than planned despite the significant increase in spending (Westerlund, 2012: 76; Herspring, 2011: 26). The Kremlin is now also faced with the problem of a struggling economy (a situation made worse by Western

sanctions following the annexation of Crimea) at a time when it plans further increases in military expenditure, leading to a greater reliance on defence supplies from abroad (Myers et al, 2014).

Thus despite the attempts at military reform and the 2020 State Armament Programme, which aimed to equip the military with 30% of new arms by 2015 and 70% by 2020, Russia is unlikely to ever close the gap with China, the US and NATO, ensuring that its reliance on nuclear weapons will continue ‘indefinitely’ (Oxenstierna & Berstrand, 2012: 58; Sokov, 2011: 249). Several scholars agree that the outlook for Russia’s conventional military is bleak—it now stands on the ‘precipice of irrelevance’ so that the nation may be classified as a ‘strategic backwater’—according to one Washington-based analyst I spoke to (Goure, 2011: 265).⁶⁰

Returning to the 1990s and early 2000s, there continued at this time to be a debate over the proper role for nuclear weapons in Russian security policy. For example, within the military General Anatoly Kvashnin and then defence minister Igor Sergeyev were engaged in ‘constant conflict’, with the former favouring expanded conventional forces whilst the latter promoted a more robust nuclear arsenal, a

⁶⁰ Interview: JA

situation leading to ‘bureaucratic chaos’ (Herspring, 2011: 6-7).⁶¹ Thereafter Putin stated that he was not ‘surprised’ by the US abrogating the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT) in 2002 but considered it a ‘mistake’. He also said he did not believe it would ‘pose a threat to the national security of the Russian Federation’, whereas the previous Russian line was that such an action would lead to a new nuclear arms race (BBC, 2001). Indeed, as Andrei Shoumikhin (2011: 104) notes, Russia formerly saw the ABMT as ‘the cornerstone of strategic stability in bilateral relations and the foundation of geopolitical “parity” between the superpowers’.⁶²

By 2003 Russia’s nuclear weapons policy had begun to ‘stabilise’ as shown by the publication of the Ministry of Defence’s new White Paper (Sokov, 2003). The second wave of NATO enlargement took place in 2004, including two former Warsaw Pact members—Bulgaria and Romania and three former members of the USSR—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. At the 2008 NATO summit George W. Bush administration had also wanted to extend membership to Georgia and Ukraine, a move strongly opposed by Moscow, as it did not want NATO or the EU encroaching on former

⁶¹ According to Arbatov and Dworkin (2005: 42), Kvashnin persuaded the Kremlin in 2000 to redistribute funds from the land-based ICBM force to ‘general purpose forces’, something they consider a ‘grave strategic blunder’ for financial and strategic reasons, not least because it enabled the US to ‘abandon’ the ABM Treaty and START negotiations.

⁶² Phillip Marguiles (2008: 59) has speculated that this change in tack was due to the fact that the day after the US left the ABMT Russia withdrew from the START II agreement which banned multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) being used on ICBMs. This was convenient for Russia as its limited capacity to produce missiles meant that MIRV-ing had again become Russia’s principal means of maintaining nuclear parity with the US (Westerlund & Roffey, 2012: 138). However, one London-based analyst I spoke to suggested that the US’s abrogation of the ABMT was a ‘serious blow to trust’ between the two nations, at a time when Russia was trying to improve its relations with the West (Interview: IS).

Soviet states (Dempsey, 2014). Karaganov (2010) thus explicitly blamed NATO expansion for the conflict in Georgia. Furthermore, Mikhail Tsypkin (2009: 783) points out that during this time 32% of the Russian public saw Putin's foreign policy 'as the main success of his tenure', the same percentage seeing his main achievement as being economic growth.

As noted above, whilst Russia reacted negatively to NATO expansion and overseas aggression, Arbatov and Dworkin (2005: 8) identify several cooperative ventures that have been proposed or launched, to varying degrees of success, over the past two decades. They describe how this cooperation has encompassed,

various economic and political spheres, peace-keeping operations, resolution of regional conflicts, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the struggle against terrorism, joint ground and naval force exercises, programs of securing and eliminating stockpiles of nuclear and chemical weapons, safe disposal of nuclear materials and old nuclear submarines, salvage operations at sea, and joint space manned systems.

Moreover, two initiatives from 1997 indicated that a warmer relationship between Russia and the West was possible. The NATO-Russia Founding Act promised to ease concerns over NATO expansion and the US-Russia Helsinki Summit suggested that Russia's concerns over long-range conventional air-launched cruise missiles and sea-launched cruise missiles would be addressed in future arms control negotiations (Sokov, 2008: 77). Whilst Washington's post-Cold War triumphalism and NATO's

expansion were key factors behind the inability to reshape US-Russian relations, Sokov (2002: 107) also suggests that Moscow could have been more 'constructive' and less 'passive' in its dealings with the West. Today, as several commentators have argued, one area where all of the major powers could make a contribution is in making clear their intentions over future plans for military modernisation (NRDC, 2013).

With regards to Russia's relationship with Europe, one of the key strategic concerns is the 1990 CFE Treaty, which created the framework for conventional arms control and stability across the continent. Yet today this system is broken, with Russia having suspended its participation in 2007, out of a concern that CFE 'flank limitations' could increase Russian vulnerability following Georgia and/or Ukraine joining NATO, a fear which intensified following the 2008 Georgia conflict (Hansell et al, 2009: 13).

Two months prior to the start of this conflict, President Dmitri Medvedev had, during a visit to Germany—Russia's most important trading partner—urged the agreement of a new European security architecture. This included a proposal to develop and sign a European Security Treaty. Moreover, in 2010 Putin, now Prime Minister, proposed a Russia-EU free trade zone 'from Lisbon to Vladivostok' and closer cooperation on energy and industrial policy, also whilst visiting Germany (Spiegel Online, 2010). Arbatov and Dworkin (2012: 103) argue that Medvedev's initiative was intended to 'provide Russia with a veto power regarding NATO's actions...in particular, its expansion' and was therefore 'deemed unacceptable by the West'.

Elsewhere, Vladimir Socor (2008) suggested Russia's aim was also to strengthen the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a security actor 'where Russia wields veto power, and promote such initiatives bilaterally with selected European governments'. Receiving little encouragement to these proposals from the EU, Hedenskog (2012: 28) argues that Russia dropped them in 2011 to instead focus its energies on developing a joint European missile defence, although the senior Russian diplomat I spoke to said Medvedev's initiative was 'still on the agenda'.⁶³

Summarising where Russia stands today, Dmitri Trenin (2013) argues that:

Russia may be European, historically and culturally, but it is apart from Europe, represented today by the European Union. For Russia, the EU has long ceased to be a mentor and has recently ceased to be a model. Instead, Russia is busy building a geopolitical unit to include much of post-Soviet Eurasia.

Whilst this may be true, several NATO nations, including Germany, the Netherlands, the US and Turkey are amongst Russia's largest trading partners. The EU and Russia are thus, economically at least, 'mutually dependent', with the former especially

⁶³ Interview: MU

reliant on Russia's coal, oil and gas reserves (Paine, 2013: 26), although Rumer (2007: 62) argues that Europe is building pipelines from Central Asia in an effort to 'wean itself off its dependence on Russian energy sources'.⁶⁴

Turning to China, in recent years it has become one of Russia's leading trade partners and the two nations share similar views across a range of political issues, including in their resistance to US hegemony (Downs, 2010: 164). There were even meetings between the two nations in 2000 to discuss a joint BMD system, though this did not go anywhere and Moscow is generally wary of expanding military cooperation with Beijing (Hansell & Perfilyev, 2009: 133). In 1996 the two nations established the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), which has become a forum where they 'can balance and coordinate their interests in Central Asia and in their immediate vicinity while at the same time keeping the US and other actors out of the region' (Hedenskog, 2012: 32).

On the other hand, some Russian analysts, whilst relatively unconcerned about China's military aspirations today, worry about possible future hostile Chinese manoeuvres, for example, the annexation of Russia's sparsely populated Far East (Hansell & Perfilyev, 2009: 135). Whilst Beijing's small nuclear arsenal does not strike fear into Russian hearts, according to one Moscow-based expert I spoke to, the

⁶⁴ For its part, Russia has attempted to forge better relations with the US and the EU to attract investment and new technology for economic and industrial modernisation as part of its wider attempt to regain great power status.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, Frank Westerlund (2012: 93) suggests that Russian state expenditure could be 'concentrated in areas where foreign materiel is not an alternative, e.g. nuclear weapons systems'.

superiority of its large and well-armed military cannot be ignored and remains in the background of Russia's nuclear planning.⁶⁵ Indeed McDermott (2011: 71) identifies Moscow's conventional inferiority as a key driver of its continued possession of tactical nuclear weapons. Similarly, Nikolai Sokov (2011: 198) has described how Russia's partly retains nuclear arsenal 'just-in-case' China 'becomes a foe...or attempts to transform Russia into a subordinate power'.⁶⁶

4.4 Domestic actors and interests driving Russian nuclear weapons decision-making

Having reviewed the significant ways in which the post-Cold War international security environment has shaped Russian nuclear weapons decision-making, we may now consider the domestic obstacles to and opportunities for nuclear disarmament, including how the domestic and international levels interact, and further assess the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation* for this case study. According to an experienced Russian analyst I interviewed, top Russian decision-makers value nuclear weapons most highly out of the five NWS because they have specific domestic political uses. In his opinion, nuclear weapons are a means by which the elite can 'manage the domestic population' as they are a potent symbol of the

⁶⁵ Interview: AB

⁶⁶ Sokov (2011: 214) goes on to describe how 'confidential interviews with high-level Russian military indicate that nuclear weapons assigned to deterrence of China are strategic and air-launched intermediate-range, i.e. weapons capable of reaching political, military, and economic targets deep inside China'.

nation and the military's greatness, thus 'preserving the population's self-esteem'.⁶⁷ Similarly, Tsypkin (2009: 784) has noted how both Yeltsin and Putin used nuclear missiles as 'political theatre' to maintain an image of strength amongst the Russia public. These weapons thus provide 'stability', give the impression that the nation is still a leader in scientific and technological achievement and act as a distraction from the years of economic turmoil following the demise of the Soviet Union.

According to the Russian analyst just mentioned, there is thus 'no point' considering the question of nuclear disarmament under the current Russian leadership, as any serious moves in this direction would 'undermine its power base' and amount to 'political suicide'.⁶⁸ Karaganov (2011) has made similar arguments, stating that the idea of 'nuclear zero' is 'not only unrealistic, but outright dangerous' so that the only point of arms control for Russia is as a bargaining tool to build trust and transparency between the great powers (McDermott, 2011: 79).

If this formulation is correct and the current ruling regime in Moscow has become inextricably linked with the possession of nuclear weapons, it is necessary to explore how this regime's power might be weakened so that alternative political groupings that are supportive of nuclear disarmament might emerge. One of the main problems we face here is that the political atmosphere in Russia is such that

⁶⁷ Interview: IS

⁶⁸ Interview: IS

discussions of nuclear weapons by Russian analysts working in that country only rarely criticise domestic political decisions, presumably because to do so and actively promote nuclear disarmament would challenge the Kremlin's authority and thus carry personal and professional risks. It is worth emphasising however, that Russia retains substantial expert knowledge, both governmental and non-governmental, concerning nuclear arms control and disarmament, stemming from the continual negotiations in this area since the 1960s (Hansell et al, 2009: 8).

There are thus two alternatives available to decrease Russian reliance on nuclear weapons according to Nikolai Sokov (2009: 76). The first, which has already been discussed, is for Russia to successfully build up its conventional forces so they can substitute for nuclear deterrence. The second is that Russia's security situation is 'improved just enough to facilitate a change in the domestic political lineup so that "pro-nuclear" groups do not hold the veto over decision making on this issue. Then, if the political leadership decides to minimize reliance on nuclear weapons, it will be able to do so.' This latter argument has much merit but does not address whether Russian elites should rein in their regional and international political ambitions or whether and how domestic political change could occur, leading to a more progressive government. As already asserted, it is therefore necessary to also consider the possibility of domestic political change occurring, with or without external developments conducive to disarmament.

Whilst during the Cold War, it was true to say that the Soviet Union 'did not *have* a

military-industrial-complex; rather it *was* one' (Westerlund, 2012: 65-87), things have now changed. According to Fredrik Westerlund, the 'deeply dysfunctional' relationship between the defence ministry and industry has led to this sector now being a 'dependent' of the state, rather than its principal focus. Yet the defence industry still retains a 'crucial' role in the economy, not least as a large employer, receiving a boost in recent years owing to increased orders from the Russian state and the nation being one of the world's largest arms exporters, with China and India two of its biggest customers (Ibid; SIPRI, 2014 i) More broadly, contemporary observers of Russia describe it as a 'managed' or 'vertical' democracy, with immense power concentrated in the President's office (Laruelle, 2009). Putin has occupied this office for three non-consecutive terms since 2000, handling the powerful 'financial-industrial clans' upon which the Russian political system 'uneasily' rests (Tsypkin, 2009: 782).

As analysts at IMEMO (Arbatov et al, 2012: 102) argue, after 2000, Moscow chose to 'insure its sovereignty and centralized rule by building an authoritarian political regime on the basis of carbon-export economy', a course 'which required a notion of immanent external threat as one of the instruments of consolidation'. Mikhail Tsypkin (2009: 782) paints a vivid picture of just how the Russian political process works today, describing it as a 'special operation'—a term from Soviet intelligence referring to 'covert activities pursued in order to achieve political results'.

This centralised rule is particularly tight when it came to national security policy,

including nuclear weapons, which several analysts (Arbatov, 2012; Hansell et al, 2009: 7) note became far more restricted under Putin's rule decision-making than his predecessor as he 'built a decision-making pyramid that consolidated power in his hands'. For Arbatov (2012: 74), nuclear weapons are thus the section of the Russian state least influenced by 'civilian control and democratic accountability'. This has led to a lack of understanding of the basics of nuclear weapons and arms control amongst much of the Russian political class (Tsypkin, 2009: 785). Moreover, if military spending and procurement are not subject to more transparency, with some oversight by the Duma, media and general public, it is doubtful whether Russia will be able to achieve effective modernisation and reform in this area (Oxenstierna & Berstrand, 2012: 51). Yet at present, for Boris Kagarlitsky (2002: 6, 160), the Russian state is only 'pseudo-parliamentary' because the Duma, when established, 'had no power' and a true multi-party system has not developed.

Certain public opinion polls from recent years appear to show that Russians are generally supportive of their government's nuclear weapons policy. For example, one of the few in-depth polls on this subject from 2000 found that 40% of Russians believed that nuclear weapons gave their country 'political might' (Sumner, 2000), though another poll from 2005 suggested that Russians believed that several other factors, such as human rights and culture, were of greater consequence (Podvig, 2005). More generally, a 2007 poll showed that 63% of Russians support the aim of eliminating all nuclear weapons, with 66% wanting their government to 'do more to pursue this objective' (World Public Opinion, 2007).

Importantly, there is a wider domestic function of nuclear weapons for the political elite that controls them so tightly, something often unmentioned and which does not appear in official documents—namely regime survival. As one Russian political analyst I interviewed suggests, nuclear weapons can deter Western attempts to ‘get too involved in Russia’s affairs’. Nuclear weapons therefore act as an ‘ideological defence’ for the Kremlin, which has recently seen regimes without nuclear weapons being toppled either by the West or with the latter’s support in the Middle East and during the Arab Spring.⁶⁹ Moreover, during the ‘colour revolutions’ of 2003-2005 in Georgia and Ukraine, Moscow believed the West was trying to interfere in and destabilise Russia’s traditional sphere of influence (Laruelle, 2009: 145).

Similarly, Eugene B. Rumer (2007: 25) has written about how ‘Russian security interests call for Moscow to maintain a security belt around its periphery, made up of satellites compliant with Russian policy preferences’. Again, we may decode ‘Russian’ here to mean the security interests of the ruling regime, which does not want popular unrest and democratic political demands from neighbouring countries spreading to its territory. To this degree, nuclear weapons act as a tool to bind the elite to the people through a nationalist discourse whereby the ‘managers of democracy’ in the ruling United Russia party protect the Russian nation against external threats, which it has itself sometimes over-hyped for domestic political gain. This may in the short-term provide benefits to the current occupants of the Kremlin but cuts against Russia’s real long-term security interests and needs.

⁶⁹ Interview: IS

Firstly, as Alexander Konovalov (Schell, 1998: 159) points out, ‘the real challenges of Russia’s future are in the south and the Far East...but because of NATO expansion, the West forces Russia to think about the European theater’. This has meant European security has been subject to ‘nuclearization’ as military planners react to perceived threats posed by NATO’s conventional superiority. Tsypkin (2009: 788-791) suggests that this shows the US’s insensitivity to the concern with ‘strategic depth’ in Russian strategic culture which must cater for the world’s greatest landmass, extensive border including Europe, China and the Arctic and a sizable population. Thus, based on the response by the Kremlin to the US’s plans for BMD in Central Europe, military intelligence, which during Soviet times sometimes ‘wildly’ exaggerated the Western threat, has grown in influence, whilst that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—known to provide more realistic analysis and be amenable to proposals on arms control and disarmament—has diminished. Secondly, as Jonathan Schell (1998: 156) contends, despite its huge nuclear arsenal, these weapons proved ‘entirely powerless’ to prevent the fall of the Soviet Union.⁷⁰

Thus, as Nikolai Zlobin (2012) avers, the Kremlin has cynically created ‘a besieged-fortress mentality in the minds of the people’ by rallying them against ‘an outside enemy’. As a result, global public opinion polls consistently show the Russian public

⁷⁰ Retired General Makhmut Gareev (McDermott, 2011: 68) has made a complementary point, arguing that, ‘Having a mindset that Russia’s security is guaranteed as long as there are nuclear weapons do not conform fully to the new realities. We know the Soviet Union had nuclear weapons, but nuclear weapons remain and there is no union state.’ He went on to point out that nuclear weapons are useless in local conflicts such as Chechnya, against economic or cyber threats and other subversive acts against Russia.

to be among those with the most negative views of the US (Tsyarkin, 2009: 793; Pew Research, 2014). The result has been that Cold War stereotypes, which had never been wholly discarded, were revived as conflict outpaced cooperation and reactionary forces in the US and Russia found new soil in which to grow. It must be said, however, that this relationship is and was more beneficial to Russian than American hawks given that, as we have seen, the latter principally turned to threats from terrorism, the Middle East and China to justify maintaining a huge military after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Yet it remains the case that (albeit now to a different degree than during the Cold War) at times of tension the pro-militarist and pro-nuclear camps in both capitals feed off another in a kind of symbiotic relationship. This is because certain sections of the elite in both Russia and the US have a mutual bureaucratic and institutional interest in maintaining control and influence over national policy. Thus, according to Mikhail Tsyarkin and Anya Loukianova (2009: 119), the Russian defence industry supports 'continued, even enhanced reliance on nuclear weapons' and also largely opposes US-Russian cooperation because of 'both the traditional perceptions inherited from the Soviet period and the acute competition in global arms markets'. The Russian military-industrial base therefore needs sections of the US's political establishment to engage in the game of demonisation, threats and sabre-rattling. This cycle of enmity benefits militarists and nationalists in both nations, so that US proponents of European NATO nations retaining non-strategic nuclear weapons can justify this by pointing to an aggressive, rearming Russia as a dangerous belligerent

whilst US proposals for BMD in Eastern Europe provoke ‘outrage’ in Moscow, fostering an ‘atmosphere of grievance’ which strengthens the ruling elite (Scowcroft et al, 2014; Tsypkin, 2009: 794).⁷¹

The image of an all conquering and belligerent Russia has therefore recently been conveyed to the world despite the fact that its economy is stagnating, its political model is unstable and its military is relatively weak (IISS, 2015). With regards to the latter, Russia possesses only limited power projection capabilities—with a regional rather than global reach—and is surrounded by nations with more sophisticated, hi-tech weaponry (Carlsson & Norberg, 2012: 114; Rumer, 2009: 74). Moreover, according to a report by the Natural Resources Defense Council (2013: 7), ‘the conventional military balance now favors NATO over Russia by a factor of 3 to 1’ whilst ‘in military expenditures, the ratio of NATO to Russia is 20 to 1’.

On a more optimistic note, two interviewees I spoke to (one working for a Russian NGO and one for the Russian government) voiced the opinion that the Ukraine crisis may present an opportunity to give the US-Russia relationship a ‘deep shake’ and start things afresh ‘with a clear piece of paper.’⁷² Indeed, Fyodor Lukyanov (2012)

⁷¹ One Moscow-based analyst I spoke to argued that conservative forces used the Crimean conflict as an opportunity to push their arguments with journalists and the media (Interview: AB). Kremlin-backed journalist Dmitry Kiselyov’s claim in March 2014 that Russia could turn the US ‘to radioactive ash’ was thus symbolic of a developing rhetorical style, whereby it is ‘becoming mainstream to blame the US’. For this analyst, such an atmosphere makes diplomacy and the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs more arduous, whilst the rhetoric becomes a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’.

⁷² Interviews: AB; MU

describes how Russia's current 'battle' against the West gives the Kremlin 'an opportunity to build a new foundation for national development'. However, as he points out, 'the thing that everyone can agree on, from the ultra-left to the ultra-right, is that Russia needs self-sufficient modernization more than it needs Gorbachev style accommodation with the West.' The message here is that Russia may now go further in 'de-coupling' from the 'previous Western model of development' and close off its economy.

One method not mentioned here, but by which Russia would be able to divert funds to much-needed 'modernisation' and invest in social goods and services, is to cut spending on its nuclear weapons programmes and military forces more generally. Importantly, the burden of total military spending on Russia's economy is roughly twice that of other countries—excluding the US (Oxenstierna & Berstrand, 2012: 45). Reorienting the economy away from wasteful military expenditure should therefore be a priority, given that, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Russia has 'poverty and income inequalities well above the OECD average' (OECD, 2011). Such a shift could be brought about by a public discussion of Russia's defence and security policies, yet the prospects for this are clearly inauspicious whilst the Kremlin is 'harnessing patriotic sentiment to consolidate its support amongst society', in the words of Gudkov, and divert attention from the deep structural problems facing Russia's economy (Nechepurenko, 2014).

Separately, Tsypkin and Loukianova (2009: 118) suggest that if Russia's strong position as a 'leader' in nuclear energy and proponent of peaceful nuclear energy were 'gradually emphasized' above its status as a NWS, then this 'trade-off' might support initiatives to 'engage Russia on disarmament'. Any shift to a new economic and political regime that is supportive of nuclear disarmament will significantly depend on Russia's external security environment and how acceptable such changes are to Russian society at large. One key question here, as Eugene B. Rumer (2007: 51) highlights, is how amenable Russians might be to further social and political 'upheavals'. Given their recent history, Rumer argues, Russians currently prefer stability to the 'uncertainties' of liberal democracy, despite the significant grievances held against their own government.

Elsewhere, several prominent Russian authors have emphasised the importance of the country engaging in liberal and democratic reforms, but have also urged caution regarding the prospects for such a transformation. For example, Kagarlitsky (2002: 135, 280) has argued that the Russian people 'are not ready for democracy' but 'do not want dictatorship', a situation which arose with the 'decay of society' after the fall of the USSR and which is 'aggravated in turn by the bankruptcy of politics'. Similarly, Anna Politkovskaya (2004: 273, 284) argued that whilst Putin's supporters have exaggerated his popular appeal, the public's 'limitless apathy' and 'fearful' reaction to Putin's behaviour enabled his 'cynical manipulation' of Russia. Kagarlitsky (2002: 280) therefore proposes that the 'historic task' for Russia, if the nation's economic and political life is to survive, will be to 'search for new forms of social

being', which will emerge from and support a self-organising and politically engaged citizenry. Signs of such a democratic movement could be seen the anti-corruption protests of 2011, so that, as Perry Anderson (2015: 15) observes, 'widespread opposition' to Putin exists 'in the centre of the country'. Yet, for former Presidential aide Gleb Pavlovsky (2014: 65), a credible rival to Putin, who will be able to maintain existing living standards, has yet to emerge.

Looking forward, Rumer (2007: 84) therefore argues that Americans and Europeans need to realise that the emergence and development of democratic and progressive forces in Russia requires them to 'engage, explain, listen and watch carefully, and help wherever help is sought and possible to give'. To this extent, the path to cooperation on nuclear disarmament will depend on wider forms of cooperation and confidence-building requiring patient engagement between nations over the long-term. Furthermore, this type of initiative will likely only be possible if the costs of inaction and the benefits of success are clearly explained to the American and Russian publics by political leaders, the media and civil society in order to harness the energy required to break through the current impasse and sustain such efforts over time.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored a range of views on Russian nuclear politics in order to

ascertain the explanatory power of mainstream, realist and critical approaches to the causes and consequences of nuclear possession and disarmament. For the Russian case study, the security model is most persuasive when outlining the high barriers to nuclear disarmament driven by Russia's perception of the US and NATO as an existential threat. Nuclear weapons thus continue to be highly valued because the Kremlin and, to an extent, the general populace, still see their nation as a great power and regional hegemon seeking independence from Western containment. Moscow's nuclear deterrence strategy is therefore a response to a national sense of Western encirclement as well as the need to ensure regime survival. Yet, as several authors noted above have explained, Russian nuclear possession also plays an integral role in its domestic political system as a symbol of the ruling elite's domination over society and its continuity with the Soviet era when the nation was a world superpower—which is in line with the expectations of *institutional democratisation*.

Given that Russia is an authoritarian one-party state—a guardianship in and of itself— it is clear that there are thus greater barriers to *institutional democratisation* than for the nuclear possessors that are liberal democracies. As such, despite the current regime showing signs of vulnerability given recent crises and troubles at home and abroad, it is likely that Russian democracy and moves towards disarmament will take some time to emerge. In the short term it will therefore be vital for Russia's current guardians of the arsenal to do their part in ensuring strategic stability with the US, to prevent conflict and thus avert a potential nuclear

war.

Despite the fractured nature of relations between Moscow and Washington today, the period from the fall of the Soviet Union to the present can be seen as one of a series of lost opportunities for the causes of both *institutional democratisation* and nuclear disarmament. Despite Reagan and Gorbachev coming close but ultimately failing to agree to the abolition of nuclear weapons at Reykjavik, the latter's new thinking, driven by a spirit of cooperation and nonviolence on the international front and liberalising moves at home, opened up the potential to permanently demilitarise relations between East and West. Some progress was made with important agreements, including the INF and CFE treaties, offering hope that a new and lasting political and security settlement could be reached. Yet the ABMT has been jettisoned and the INF and CFE agreements are under threat of collapse—just when such initiatives are most needed.

The current malaise can be explained by the fact that, following the demise of the Soviet Union, a triumphalist US and NATO—throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century—chose to largely exclude Russia whilst building the new international order, instead acting in ways which Russians found particularly threatening. This led a weakened and humiliated Russia, now led by the authoritarian regime of Vladimir Putin, to cling to nuclear weapons as one of the few remaining sources of strength in a unipolar world ruled by force. Gorbachev's idealism was thus well and truly dead having been replaced by a realism of short-term tactics aimed at protecting Russian

sovereignty from external meddling. The power of the President and his circle of oligarchs was thus consolidated whilst the prospects for social democracy withered away.

This situation clearly benefited nationalist and militarist forces in Moscow (and to a lesser extent in Washington, though this has been more the case following the Georgia and Ukraine conflicts) who were able to rally popular support for increased spending on conventional and nuclear weapons as part of a renewed emphasis on finding military solutions to political problems, all of which boosted their own institutional power bases. Thus whilst rhetorically US and Russian political leaders professed to be developing a new political partnership, in reality Moscow increasingly saw NATO's actions as a direct danger and acted accordingly. US and Russian officials thus continued meeting to discuss issues of strategic stability and manage their nuclear standoff, with bureaucrats exchanging detailed information about several aspects of their arsenals during arms control negotiations. Yet the responsibility each nation has to achieve nuclear disarmament required them to commit to a long-term political partnership to deal with the mutual threat of nuclear war, something that neither of these nation's leaderships—with their particular brands of elite economic domination and prominent nationalist and militarist cultures—are or were capable of.

Thus, at present, Russian leaders prefer to sit alongside their US counterparts as equals through retaining a sizable nuclear arsenal. These leaders face virtually no

domestic pressure within Russia that may cause them to reconsider the costs and benefits of nuclear weapons and the policies that govern them. Whilst there is evidence that significant sections of the Russian public would support moves to further reduce their nuclear arsenal, there is no domestic movement or institutional focus for their preferences, either in the media or parliament. The current dire state of relations with the US also means that disarmament talk struggles to find prominent supporters in Russia with unilateral measures completely off the table. In any case, information on the Russian nuclear weapons system is scarce and rarely discussed publicly—except to drum up patriotic fervour.

Yet were debate concerning the social, environmental and financial costs and risks of these weapons to enter public discourse it is possible that opposition to them could, as seen in Western democracies, rise accordingly, opening up a new political space for dissent and alternative security policies to be proposed. Given the structural disarmament taking place in Russia there is an opportunity at this time to raise fundamental questions about the necessity of retaining nuclear weapons so that the momentum is towards zero rather than the establishment of a more resilient deterrent—militarily and politically—at low numbers. Moreover, the weighty technical and diplomatic knowledge concerning arms control and disarmament resident in Russian governmental and non-governmental bodies could be harnessed to support such efforts as part of moves in the direction of *institutional democratisation*.

As it is, and given the desire of Russian elites to protect and maximise their power, it is likely that nuclear disarmament for Russia will thus only take place when a new, democratic and liberal-minded regime is in place. How this might happen is clearly a complex question for the medium to long-term, yet it is possible to identify some measures that can be taken in the short-term to cultivate the development of such progressive forces. For example, given the internal contradictions and many weaknesses within its economic and political model, Russia—meaning the nation and its citizens rather than the elite alone—needs to find a new basis for security and an alternative purpose beyond achieving ‘great power status’, a goal that primarily benefits those in the Kremlin. In order to do so, Russia requires that good relationships with democratic European nations are maintained given the latter’s demand for Russian energy and its hi-tech industrial exports, including defence equipment.

Yet the current sanctions following Crimea, have damaged an already failing economy leading to calls for Russia to distance itself further from the West. This may appear attractive to the purveyors of ‘vertical democracy’ as a short-term means to harness nationalist sentiment, but will, in the long run, only further undercut the possibilities for the modernisation of Russia’s infrastructure and the health and wellbeing of its populace. Moreover, if Russians perceive their lot to be worsening over the next decade, it will be harder for the ruling elite to maintain their hold on power if discontent returns to the streets of Russian cities, which could result in a more unpalatable regime—with an even greater commitment to military might and

nuclear weapons—attaining power.

Looking forward then, if Russia is to move away from reliance on nuclear weapons it will need to be included in cooperative proposals coming from the US and Europe that recognise Russia's legitimate security fears and concerns. As discussed in the previous chapter, the recent political situation in the US has not, to say the least, inspired optimism for such a shift of priorities. Yet it is worth noting that other middle powers, such as Germany, might play a constructive role in mending the relationship between Russia and the West. For example, Germany and other influential states on good terms with Russia could put political capital into revisiting some of the economic and security proposals for Russo-European cooperation made in recent times. Looking more widely, the promise of a truly multipolar world order where Russia feels itself to be an equal and is integrated economically and politically with both the rising powers of Brazil, India, China and South Africa—widely known as the BRICS—but also the other major Western nations, could open up new possibilities for international cooperation and the construction of security communities that delegitimise the threat and use of force as instruments of state policy.

Chapter Five: United Kingdom

Introduction

This chapter assesses the extent to which *institutional democratisation*, and other mainstream and realist approaches, provide insight and understanding into the causes and consequences of UK nuclear possession and disarmament. The chapter proceeds in several sections, beginning by comparing and contrasting different historical views on the UK's nuclear experience since World War Two before moving on to discuss modern day British nuclear politics. Chapter Eight then contextualises the UK's responsibility for disarmament action alongside the other NWS and makes appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

The first section of this chapter summarises the mainstream and realist approaches explored in Chapter Two in relation to the UK's particular experience as a NWS. This is principally done by placing the UK's development of nuclear weapons within the context of relevant historical events from the mid to late 20th and early 21st century—focusing, in particular, on the Cold War, where the UK became a NWS as part of a close military alliance with the United States in opposition to the Soviet Union. I also explore justifications for Britain retaining the bomb and arguments against disarmament from advocates of nuclear possession as well as how the UK has officially justified its nuclear status over time. For example, the UK government

has historically presented nuclear possession as a necessity to ensure national security via deterrence given the external threats posed to UK freedom and democracy and the nation's other vital interests. Yet there are also strong domestic political factors driving the UK's nuclear weapons decision-making and international policy more generally, including those relating to the dynamics in and between political parties, inter-service rivalries, the maintenance of elite group's position in the social order and other bureaucratic concerns.

The second section of this chapter explores these domestic factors and considers the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation* regarding the causes and consequences of UK nuclear possession and disarmament. Official justifications for the UK's nuclear status are also challenged and the limitations in the mainstream and realist literature's explanation of UK nuclear politics identified. This is done initially through an exploration of critical perspectives on the Cold War and UK global strategy to identify historical approaches that support the specific claims and ideas of *institutional democratisation*. Previous work focusing on the UK's domestic nuclear politics is also discussed here in order to specify the wider impact nuclear possession has had on the UK's polity, relate this to criticisms of the UK's record as a liberal democracy and its maintenance of a sizable and costly military establishment, and highlight existing scholarly arguments compatible with the main contentions of this thesis.

Having provided this historical overview of the different approaches to UK nuclear

possession and disarmament, the third section of this chapter goes into more detail concerning current obstacles to and opportunities for *institutional democratisation* in the UK by reviewing modern day UK politics in relation to the nuclear question. A range of evidence is presented to show both how wide the democratic deficit is in the UK and how this is reflected in and relates to the gap between UK public opinion on nuclear arms control and disarmament and the actions of elite actors and the UK government.

For example, the present state of the UK peace and disarmament movement and public opinion concerning the UK's role in the world is considered to explore civil society's potential contribution to disarmament initiatives and how these may develop and be strengthened as part of a wider democratisation process. Given the UK's role as a key lieutenant of the US in managing global order, British nuclear disarmament—as part of a new approach to international policy prioritising human rights and international law—would likely have an important impact on both Western and global nuclear politics. It is therefore argued that *institutional democratisation* in the UK would play a key role here as a process which has the potential to influence the US's global strategy in transitioning from one of military dominance and offensive unilateralism to a more restrained, consensual and multilateralist profile, including through progressive demilitarisation.

5.1 Mainstream and realist perspectives on the causes and consequences of UK nuclear possession and disarmament

Whilst the UK was, following the US and USSR, the third nation to acquire nuclear weapons in 1952, it was also, as Andrew Brown (2008: 37) notes, 'the first state to take the decision to acquire an atom bomb'. As Scott Sagan (1996: 58) explains, realist explanations of the British decision to develop nuclear weapons—based on the security model—emphasise the 'growing Soviet military threat' and the reduced 'credibility' of US extended deterrence guarantees following the USSR developing the ability to 'threaten retaliation against the United States'. UK planners thus wanted to be able to deter the Soviet Union, for example, should the US 'go it alone' and start a war when they saw an advantage (Coleman & Siracusa: 2006: 25). It was—and is—also believed that being a nuclear possessor allows the UK to retain influence in Washington in order, as Roger Ruston (1989) vividly puts it, to have a 'say in the end of the world'.

Margaret Gowing (1974: 184-5), meanwhile, identifies several factors driving the early British pursuit of nuclear weapons in addition to its desire to be able to deter an 'atomically armed enemy', whether Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. For example, as a great military power Britain must possess 'all major new weapons', with the bomb symbolising British strategic independence. According to Andrew Dorman (2017: 15-16), 'successive British governments' have valued possessing an 'independent nuclear deterrent' because the experience of WW2 led to a

recognition that ‘ultimately one state might not be prepared to sustain massive losses for another’. Furthermore, Winston Churchill justified the British bomb as being necessary to ensure that Soviet military targets ‘would be given what we consider the necessary priority’ based on what planners saw as the UK’s unique vulnerability to nuclear attack owing to its size and proximity to Europe (Clark & Wheeler, 1989: 10-12, 71). Thus, as Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin asserted about the new nuclear technology—and despite the cost at a time of austerity—‘We could not afford to acquiesce in an American monopoly of this new development,’ and ‘We’ve got to have the bloody Union Jack on top of it’ (Brown, 2008: 39).

As Malcolm Chalmers (1984: 11) notes, another official UK justification for nuclear possession was that the UK would act as a second centre of decision-making in Europe, meaning that the Soviet Union would more likely be ‘deterred from aggression’. In addition to deterring attacks on the British mainland, in the late 1950s the UK’s airborne nuclear force was also tasked with a global role as part of the UK’s commitments to NATO.⁷³ Kristan Stoddart (2012: 80, 232) explains that this role ‘was fulfilled through ‘independence in concert’ with the United States’ and that V-bombers were deployed for this mission because they were ‘far more flexible than Polaris’ and ‘could be used as a visible politico-military signal to reassure friends and dissuade potential adversaries from hostile action.’

⁷³ As Stoddart (2012: 80) points out the UK’s nuclear force was also ‘tasked at a strategic level to support the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), covering the Middle East, and the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO)’ albeit ‘to a much lesser extent’.

Today, supporters of Britain remaining a nuclear possessor, such as former US Defense Secretary Ash Carter (Reuters, 2016), argue that the UK can and should 'punch above its weight' in order to continue playing an 'outsized role' in the world. According to this logic—found in the arguments of prominent pro-Trident figures such as Commodore Tim Hare (2011)—by disarming, the UK would shirk its global responsibilities and would have to downgrade its ambitions, leading to a loss of influence and international status, as well as pressure to let go of its permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Disarmament would, moreover, cause the UK to lose the security and stability nuclear deterrence provides and could create the perception that the UK is a 'soft target for nuclear blackmail and intimidation' in the words of Peter Cannon (2012) of the Henry Jackson Society.

Such concerns, it is argued, are of crucial importance in a volatile world where the only certainty is uncertainty. For example, Booth and Wheeler (2008: 266) point to Tony Blair's remarks in 2006, prior to the government's decision on whether to replace the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system, that 'the United Kingdom should continue as a nuclear weapons state, for at least the next 50 years, because 'the one certain thing about our world today is its uncertainty'. For adherents of this mindset, such as Lord George Robertson (2011), recent events, including the Arab Spring, suggest that the future will be beset by continual surprises and shocks, some of a nuclear nature, heightening risk and the need for security guarantees. For example, the DPRK has tested a nuclear weapon and Iran is seeking to acquire one, whilst both China and Russia are modernising their nuclear arsenals. For Conservative Way

Forward (2012), the UK should treat China as a competitive rising power whilst Russia's behaviour is of concern and must be carefully watched in case an aggressive and extremist leadership takes power.

Proponents of the UK remaining a NWS, such as Sir David Omand (2011) also tend to aver that NATO's collective security system—including a framework of deterrence extended from the US to its European allies—is fundamental to the UK's national security. Ending the UK's nuclear contribution would, Cannon (2012) therefore argues, weaken this system by making it dependent on France (as the only NWS in Europe) and the US. Such a development would also, for Hare (2011) likely open up new fault lines and stresses in the Euro-Atlantic relationship, jeopardising US commitments to Europe. In addition, Omand (2011) argues that any action which jeopardised the US commitment to providing a nuclear 'umbrella' over Europe would not only affect British and European security but could also put at risk Washington's extended deterrence in the Far East and Pacific regions.

In general, opponents of disarmament argue that the UK would therefore not gain anything from giving up its nuclear weapons. For example, Lord Robertson (2011) argues that such a move would not have any positive impact on global nuclear proliferation. This is, he argues, shown by the fact that the significant disarmament that the UK has already carried out has done nothing to discourage proliferation among those states that desire nuclear weapons capability. On the contrary, Conservative Way Forward (2012) propose that unilateral disarmament would

ensure that the UK has no influence or leverage over multilateral disarmament negotiations. Instead of moving to zero, the UK—according to Hare (2011)—should promote its ‘disarmament and security record’, continue its work on developing verification technology and—for Lord Michael Boyce (2011)—encourage the US and Russia to take the lead on disarmament, following on from the New START treaty. Opponents of disarmament, such as former Defense Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind (2014: 7), also point to the significant public support for the UK remaining a NWS.

In terms of a multilateral path to zero of the kind sketched out by groups such as the Deep Cuts Commission and the Canberra Commission, the UK government’s position is that it would join in such a process after the US and Russia have reached low numbers of nuclear weapons. For example, during Gordon Brown’s tenure as Prime Minister the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2009) produced an information paper entitled *Lifting the Nuclear Shadow: Creating the Conditions for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons*, wherein the government outlined how it would fulfill its commitments under the NPT. The document stated that the UK would ‘continue to work towards the total elimination of our own nuclear arsenal and all others through multilateral, mutual and verifiable agreements’. Furthermore, when ‘useful’, the government would willingly include in any negotiations ‘the small proportion of the world’s nuclear weapons that belong to the UK’ (Ibid: 12).

5.2 Critical perspectives on the causes and consequences of UK nuclear possession and disarmament

Alternative, critical perspectives on the causes and consequences of UK nuclear possession and disarmament, such as *institutional democratisation*, focus on the role played by domestic politics. Defenders of the UK's nuclear status, such as Michael Quinlan (2009: 121), thus hint at but do not explain the domestic 'political, institutional and other motivations, as distinct from security rationales' for, what he describes as, Britain's 'independent' possession of the bomb. It is therefore necessary to look elsewhere for evidence and ideas supporting *institutional democratisation*. For example, according to John Simpson and Jenny Nielsen (2010: 86), rather than being subject to democratic influence and control, the original British decision to acquire nuclear weapons was, taken by 'a small group of key cabinet members in private' and subsequent British governments 'continued to favour taking decisions through this process'. For Lawrence Freedman (1980: 54) the established tradition was one of 'secret and bipartisan policy-making' with an 'emphasis on continuity'. Beatrice Heuser (1998: 16-21) similarly observes that British political culture is less democratic than the US's, so that the normal secrecy on defence and nuclear issues is only heightened in the UK and the public is 'told very little'. Heuser (Ibid) links this situation to the historic 'mutual fear' characterising the 'class divide' in the UK, which consists of the British establishment's 'fear of the masses', who elites see as an 'internal threat', whilst the people themselves are suspicious of 'the ruling classes'.

The continuity which Freedman and Heuser refer to is explained, in relation to the bomb, by analysts such as Nick Ritchie (2006) and Malcolm Chalmers (2010: 2), who highlight the defence establishment's inherent conservatism, resistance to radical change and the bureaucratic and technological momentum that pushes British nuclear possession along. For a nation of its size the British military establishment is particularly large meaning that it carries significant weight in decision-making. As David Edgerton (2006: 1-3) notes, this situation came about as between 1939 and 1955 a 'military-industrial-scientific complex' was created that amounted to a 'warfare state', giving the UK a 'sharply differentiated third place in a bipolar world'. Notably, Edgerton (Ibid: 12) also states that following World War Two the UK underwent a 'radical change' so that it was 'no longer as liberal- economically, politically, intellectually'.

Even today, when the UK is seen as a declining power, the still significant size and scale of the British 'warfare state' makes the question of loss aversion particularly pertinent when discussing disarmament. Tony Blair (2010: 636) thus argued in his memoirs that scrapping Trident would be too much of a downgrading of the UK's status as a nation for which no Prime Minister wanted to take the blame. In addition to international 'uncertainty' therefore, on the domestic front Blair, as Labour leader, wanted to carefully manage the nuclear issue both within the country and his party. This was necessary so that the subject would not damage Labour's internal cohesion, as it had done in the past, nor challenge the bipartisan consensus on defence and security matters. When it comes to nuclear weapons the phenomenon

of political fear thus still looms large in the UK—for some in Labour this means avoiding looking weak on security and for Conservatives, of letting their side down.

Turning to the question of the special relationship, the secrecy pervading the British nuclear weapon system during the Cold War became inextricably linked to Britain's near total dependence on the US over a range of areas. As Kristan Stoddart (2012: 14) explains, Britain can only claim to have any semblance of an independent nuclear weapons capability between 1952 and the mid-1960s. In 1962 President John F. Kennedy had agreed to provide Prime Minister Harold Macmillian with the Polaris nuclear weapons system on terms that were seen as 'remarkably favourable' to Britain (Freedman, 1980: 25). In exchange the UK committed to assign its nuclear force to NATO nuclear force and target it in accordance with alliance plans (Davis, 2015: 20). As Freedman explains, without Polaris the UK would not have had 'any sort of credible nuclear capability', given the speed of the superpower's technological development at that time (Ibid: 8). The resulting 'co-operative nuclear alliance' led Sir Frank Cooper, the Permanent Under Secretary of Defence, to state in the mid-1980s that 'if you ask me whether the Americans have an undue degree of influence over British defence policy I would have to say yes' (Stoddart, 2012: 14; Miall, 1987: 77). As Hugh Miall (Ibid) noted, in return for nuclear and intelligence material, Britain became a client state of the US, providing bases for its nuclear forces as well as diplomatic and military support when required—an arrangement that raised serious questions about the UK's claims to be a sovereign democracy.

Indeed, as Bruce Kent (2003: 64) observes, it was Britain's subordination to the US that, in the early 1980s, ignited huge public opposition to nuclear weapons, following the government's decision to host US cruise missiles and replace Polaris with the far more powerful Trident nuclear weapons system. The UK's vigorous anti-nuclear movement has existed since the early days of the bomb, with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) being founded in 1958. CND, and the wider British anti-war and peace movement's strength has ebbed and flowed over the years, largely in response to the degree of public awareness and sense of threat regarding nuclear dangers. Today whilst some surveys show that a majority of voters (54%) would prefer Britain to abandon its nuclear weapons and not replace them, other surveys show that a larger majority (81%) favour an international plan 'for totally eliminating nuclear weapons according to a timeline' (World Public Opinion, 2008; Glover, 2009). Thus, as a 2007 study by the Simons Foundation (2007) found, the UK 'boasts a high level of support for elimination of nuclear arms and nuclear testing all over the world'.

Despite the relatively low salience of nuclear issues for the British public today, there remains a backbone of researchers, parliamentarians, civil society and religious groups working to raise social consciousness regarding the costs and risks of nuclear weapons and contribute to the goal of disarmament. Rather than nuclear weapons securing British democracy, freedom and human rights, Heuser (1998: 26) points out that 'disarmers, by contrast' argue that military spending may undermine national 'prosperity and welfare', making it 'impossible' to protect vital public goods and

services.

Currently, as Ritchie (2012: 153) states, ‘the British public appears quite firm in its support of global nuclear disarmament’ whilst its support for the planned replacement of Trident is ‘increasingly limited’. Indeed, at a time of austerity the significant sums dedicated to Trident drives opposition from several fronts, including civil society groups, the public, several senior political figures, such as former defence minister Michael Portillo and Lord David Owen as well as high-ranking retired military officials (Norton-Taylor, 2009; BBC, 2012; Street, 2015). The UK’s nuclear force is also subject to international legal restrictions regarding use—which some, such as ICAN-UK (2012), interpret as meaning that any threat or use of nuclear weapons is illegal—whilst the UK’s NPT disarmament obligations require it to scrap Trident. Furthermore, the UK’s 2010 National Security Strategy (2010) asserted that the UK does not currently face a ‘major state military threat’, opening the question of who and what Trident is meant to deter.

Despite these challenges to Trident’s legitimacy, following parliamentary approval, the British government is proceeding with plans to spend tens of billions of pounds on replacing its nuclear weapons system over the next decade. Yet some, such as Ian Davis (2011: 3), have questioned whether the institutional continuity that pushes the nuclear weapons establishment along meant that modernisation began prior to it being debated by MPs. Moreover, the discourse surrounding replacement has, so far, mainly focused on the question of whether there are more affordable systems to

Trident rather than whether its replacement should be cancelled, which raises the issue of how much political influence the movement for nuclear disarmament has in the UK. Another concern with relevance to democracy, transparency and accountability concerns the UK's nuclear relationship with the US as part of NATO. For example, the independent think-tank NATO Watch (2015) has highlighted the military alliance's closed and secretive nature, whereby it denies civil society 'the right to participate in the formulation of policies that have a profound effect on their liberties and security'.

Such concerns complement arguments made by critics of the UK's overall political system. For example, David Beetham (2011: 2) argues that Britain has become an 'unelected oligarchy'. This state of affairs is the result of the 'dominance' of 'corporate and financial elites' over the government 'through the financing of political parties, think tanks and lobbying organisations, membership of advisory bodies, 'revolving doors' and joint partnerships with government'. Such an assessment stands in stark contrast to evaluations provided by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2016) and Freedom House (2017), which find that the UK scores highly across a range of indicators concerning democratic standards and civic rights. It is notable, as previously mentioned, that none of these studies directly incorporate nuclear matters or military-related institutions into their methodology, possibly given that such authors presume to be these issues to be *recondite* by nature, with relatively low political salience. Beetham (2011: 19-20), however, does provide an overview of the ways in which private interests influence government in the UK,

highlighting ‘the links between the Ministry of Defence and the arms manufacturing companies, and the strong support given by government to their international trade along with other exporters.’

5.3 UK nuclear politics today

Having provided an initial overview of how *institutional democratisation* adds explanatory value to our understanding of the causes and consequences of UK nuclear possession and disarmament, this section shall now look in more detail at contemporary nuclear politics in order to provide a fuller analysis to support the main contentions of this thesis. Public discussion of whether the UK should remain a NWS grew as 2016 approached—which was when the final decision on whether to replace Trident with a successor nuclear weapons system was supposed to be taken. Yet, as I explore below, several analysts have argued that replacement was inevitable given that key political decisions had been made, contracts for essential materials agreed and work on upgrading infrastructure begun. Moreover, the impetus for these decisions can be largely explained by domestic factors, stemming from the overlapping needs and interests of several key economic, industrial and political actors and groups. In order to understand how the UK might eventually decide to relinquish its nuclear weapons I therefore explore in this section the politics of Trident replacement in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of the forces supportive of and opposing Britain remaining a nuclear power. I also touch upon how the British state’s defence and foreign policies impact on the broader goal of a

NWFW.

Of the scholars working on this issue Nick Ritchie provides one of the most in-depth investigations of the forces working for the ‘reproduction’ of Trident in his *A Nuclear Weapons-Free World? Britain, Trident and the Challenges Ahead* (2012: 51). In this work, Ritchie identifies four key ‘enablers’ of a like-for-like replacement for Trident. These include nuclear deterrence, national identity, the nuclear relationship with the United States, and the submarine-building industry. He then outlines the main ‘resistances’, namely, the impact on efforts to move towards global nuclear disarmament; the cost of the Trident replacement programme; and alternative paths between a like-for-like replacement and unilateral nuclear disarmament. I use this framework to begin discussing the domestic politics of Britain’s nuclear weapons system below, addressing each of these areas in turn, drawing on complementary work and alternative viewpoints when appropriate in order to gain a rounded perspective on this subject.⁷⁴

To begin with deterrence, as discussed above, the question of what ‘minimal deterrence’ means for the UK is more of a political than a military issue. Indeed, as Tony Blair (2007: 636) stated in his memoirs, Trident’s utility in the post-Cold War

⁷⁴ With regards to ‘enablers’, as I have touched upon the first and third of these above, and for reasons of space, I shall mainly focus on the second and fourth of these ideas here. Similarly for ‘resistances’, I mainly focus on costs and public opinion, having discussed the UK’s disarmament obligations and alternatives in the previous section.

world is 'less in terms of deterrence, and non-existent in terms of military use'. As he admitted, what matters more to the military are 'helicopters, airlift and anti-terror equipment' yet giving up Trident would be 'too big a downgrading of our status as a nation'. What was being implicitly acknowledged here is that the UK's nuclear weapons are, and always have been, political weapons that operate on the domestic *and* international levels. At home these weapons play an important role in helping leaders to unify their parties and the nation behind the idea that the UK is a major power, which—alongside the US—bears responsibility for deterring recalcitrant states such as Russia, requiring the maintenance of high levels of defence spending.

The power and appeal of this narrative, which has its roots in the UK's victory in World War Two and the Cold War, means that nuclear possession continues to receive strong support amongst both Conservative and Labour voters (Grice, 2016). The need for proponents of the bomb to maintain Cold War stereotypes and a pervasive sense of international tension and uncertainty for domestic political gain, was recently seen in former Prime Minister David Cameron's allegation that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's opposition to nuclear deterrence made him and his party a 'threat to national security' (Stone, 2015). Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry (2017) responded to such rhetorical abuse by highlighting the Conservative party's refusal to 'commit to the principle of a nuclear-free world' and 'ignore the issue of disarmament simply for short-term political gain'. Similarly, former Shadow Defence Secretary Clive Lewis (2016) argued that Prime Minister Theresa May has used Trident 'not as a military weapon aimed at deterring enemies

overseas—but as a political weapon aimed at her party’s opposition at home’.

As Ritchie (Ibid: 4, 77) persuasively argues, given their political benefits, nuclear weapons thus today occupy a central position in the British ‘political-defence establishment’s’ self-image as a ‘major pivotal power’, something which has become embedded over time and is difficult to dislodge. Moreover, as Chalmers (1984: 52) and Hennessy (2010: 79) explain, Trident is seen by political elites as ‘essential in preserving Britain’s position in Europe’. The need is for the UK to be on a par with France and ‘a notch above’ non-nuclear Germany and Japan, which the UK lags behind in terms of economic strength. In the minds of these elites a non-nuclear UK would thus not be able to pull rank, for, as John McTernan, a former special adviser to the Blair government, put it, ‘If we didn’t have Trident we’d be Belgium’ (Ainslie, 2012: 79).

The UK is also believed to have global responsibilities as the ‘closest ally’ of the US, requiring a sizable military budget for expeditionary forces capable of intervening in crises and conflicts around the world (Ritchie, 2012: 77). Given that one of the key drivers of nuclear proliferation for weaker states is the threat of advanced conventional weaponry, British support for recent US aggression, for example in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, should be seen as detrimental to the prospects for a NWFV. Thus if, as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2009: 46) states, nuclear disarmament requires the ‘permanent reduction or elimination’ of ‘long-standing political tensions’, then the UK must commit to acting in accordance with

the UN Charter regarding the use of military force if it wants to be a responsible member of the international community and contribute to the creation of a NWWF as part of its dual disarmament responsibilities.

Moving on to the submarine industry, Ritchie (2012: 107) argues that ten companies, including defence giant BAE Systems, form a lobbying group which is 'keen to secure contracts for a fleet of new 'Successor' submarines to replace the aging Vanguard boats'. This coalition's main strength and weakness is that it is in a co-dependent relationship, where it is the only supplier and the MoD is the only customer for submarines. Key to this situation is the fact that repeated government investigations—most recently the Trident Alternatives Review (2013)—have concluded that the best platform for the UK's nuclear weapons are ballistic missiles on SSBNs. Moreover, without continual orders for submarines (including the Astute attack submarines preceding Successor) ensuring a regular 'drumbeat', the industry will wither away as core skills and experience go elsewhere, imposing a 'use it or lose it' imperative on the political executive (Ritchie, 2012: 114).

The other key industrial angle, which is of the utmost significance for Labour's evolving policy position on Trident, concerns the unions involved in the submarine industry. The Financial Times (Hollinger, 2016) has claimed that 35,000 jobs directly or indirectly rely on the UK's submarine production, whilst Professor Keith Hartley (2012: 4) estimates that 'some 26,000 jobs', some of which 'are located in high unemployment areas' will 'possibly' be supported by the Successor programme.

Thus even though, as Hartley states, there are often ‘alternative and more cost effective methods of creating UK jobs’, the fact that these jobs currently exist means that the nuclear question is a battleground for the relevant unions, with GMB and Unite in particular fighting for members.

In addition to the ‘enablers’ for Trident replacement Ritchie and others describe, in order to fully appreciate the explanatory value of *institutional democratisation*, it is necessary to outline the closed process by which UK nuclear weapons decisions have historically been taken. For example, Oxford Research Group (McLean, 1986: 90) and Hugh Miall (1987) showed in the 1980s how decisions on Britain’s nuclear weapons have long been taken by a tiny elite of ‘very senior Cabinet ministers, civil servants and service chiefs’. These denizens of the permanent bureaucracy manage nuclear weapons systems (for example, submarines, warheads, missiles), which, due to their technological sophistication are developed over decades, whilst elected representatives are in office for much shorter lengths of time. Moreover, as McLean (1986: 256) states,

any new administration or government coming to power has to take account of the realities of the status quo. These realities may concern funds already committed, unofficial agreements entered into, the pressure of alliances, the persistence of officials, or simply the lack of procedures to do what they want to do—but they are so real that they have left election manifestos in tatters.

The history of the Labour party provides ample evidence for these claims. The public was led to believe before the 1964 election that the UK's nuclear force would be scrapped and before the 1974 election that the UK would participate in multilateral disarmament negotiations and not modernise their nuclear arsenal. Such promises were discarded or watered down once Labour came to power (Freedman, 1980: 87; Hennessy, 2010: 73; Scott, 2006: 690; Stoddart, 2012). More recently, the fact that Labour, when in power, held parliamentary votes on Trident replacement and pledged that the Main Gate decision was the final decision point has given the impression that the process has been accountable and subject to democratic checks and balances. In reality, reports from 2004 and 2005 indicated that Blair had already decided to replace Trident with a new system (Ripley, 2004; Brown, 2005). This was soon followed by significant sums of money pouring into the newly privatised Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) as up-to-date facilities were constructed and additional staff recruited in order to keep the UK up to date with US technology in lieu of political assent to build new warheads (Ainslie, 2012: 76; Ritchie, 2012: 106). Civil society groups, such as Nuclear Information Service (2017), have highlighted the opaque nature of AWE's work, the immense costs of modernisation escaping public scrutiny and the serious safety and security problems at its various sites. Moreover, as Ian Davis (2011: 3) argues, the UK's submarine procurement process has also been lacking in transparency. Work on the Successor submarine programme to replace Trident began in 2008, so that, for Davis 'by the time of the anticipated review and vote at Main Gate it may already be too late to consider alternatives'.

It is also useful to bear in mind the fact that Labour has historically won elections on platforms where 'the common understanding' was that it would abandon the UK's nuclear weapons, when considering the oft cited claim that Labour lost the 1983 election to the Conservatives because of their staunchly unilateralist position on disarmament (Acton, 2014: 3; Lewis, 2014; Scott, 2006: 689). In reality, as John Curtice (1989: 157) explained, Labour's unilateralism 'was not apparently a significant reason for its electoral slide during the election and neither was the electorate moved in a pro-nuclear direction. Rather, we can see that the election period saw a shift of support towards an anti-nuclear position amongst a portion of Labour's support'. The lesson from these episodes is that, when it comes to winning elections, adopting nuclear disarmament as a policy is not the problem for political parties. Rather, as I shall now discuss, the real challenge is how to build a popular movement capable of challenging those powerful actors and institutions dedicated to Britain's continued possession of nuclear weapons and how to create a political consensus for an alternative British approach to defence and security.

Regarding where the forces supportive of disarmament in Britain stand today, a survey of contemporary public opinion by BASIC (Ritchie & Ingram, 2013: 1) found that the population 'remains deeply divided on nuclear weapons and choices around Trident replacement'. According to the report (Ibid), 'polls suggest that opinion has moved towards relinquishing nuclear weapons after Trident when given a simple yes/no choice' and that opposition increases when people are made aware of the cost of replacing Trident. The recent referendum concerning Scottish independence

also highlighted the significant public opposition to Trident north of the border (What Scotland Thinks, 2014). The ruling Scottish National Party (SNP) had pledged to make nuclear weapons illegal and force their removal from the Clyde naval base (Johnson, 2012), which some, such as Vice-Admiral John McAnally (2014), believed would lead to Britain being forced to abandon its nuclear weapons for good, principally owing to the cost of relocating Trident.

Cost has historically been a key factor for Britain's nuclear weapons system and one which decision-makers have been keen to keep hidden from the public.⁷⁵ Over three decades ago Freedman (1980: 139) pointed out that 'consideration of the proper allocation of scarce defence resources' represented 'the most compelling strategic argument against a nuclear force'. Today, it is not just the public who are liable to be oppose nuclear weapons spending at a time of deep cuts to education, health and welfare—the armed forces are reeling from cuts to the defence budget of 35% by 2018-19 compared to its 2010-11 level (Corlett & Whittaker, 2014: 24). Moreover, the Treasury stated that if the MoD wishes to replace Trident in 2016 it will now need to pay for it entirely from its own funds, without the Treasury supplementing the defence budget as it has done in the past (BBC, 2010; Ritchie, 2012: 153). Current spending projections for Trident replacement show that nuclear weapons will therefore eat up a third of the MoD's overall annual equipment budget for about fifteen years from the early 2020s (Chalmers, 2013 ii: 12). These budget cuts have

⁷⁵ Peter Hennessy (2010: 47) estimates that by the late 1980s Britain had spent between £40-£50 billion on its nuclear weapons.

led to senior military figures, particularly from the army, to express scepticism regarding the necessity of large-scale defence projects, which analysts such as Richard Norton-Taylor (2013) have interpreted as including Trident.⁷⁶ Construction on the Royal Navy's 'largest ever submarine', named HMS Dreadnought—the first of four new submarines to carry the UK's nuclear weapons—began in October 2016. Yet a review of the project by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (2016) in July 2016 found that it is 'in doubt' and faces 'major risks', with 'issues apparent in a number of key areas'.

Bearing in mind the growing criticism and questioning of Trident (and its replacement) within British society, it is perhaps understandable that the UK's nuclear allies—France and the US—have, in recent years, privately exhibited concern that Britain is close to unilaterally disarming (Leigh, 2010; The Guardian, 2010). Indeed, the UK has sought to present itself as 'the most forward leaning, progressive and transparent nuclear weapon state in the P5' (Harvey, 2011). Despite this, supporters of Trident replacement, such as former Defence Secretary Sir Malcom Rifkind, appear very confident of the Conservative party's position. As Rifkind (2014: 7) explains with regard to the policies of the main three parties on Trident in relation to public opinion, the two questions that matter are 'what the public think of the policies themselves' and 'how the adoption of a specific policy might affect the

⁷⁶ This is both because of the type of warfare the UK and its allies expect to be engaged in in future and the fact that being a nuclear weapon state and having a credible nuclear deterrence posture requires, in theory, sufficient conventional military power to ensure a proportionate ladder of escalation leading to the possibility of nuclear detonation, the circumstances of which are always kept ambiguous (Street, 2015).

public's perception of their party'.

In summary, Rifkind draws several conclusions from the polling data. Firstly, the public is far more favourable to replacement than generally understood and the issue of Trident's cost—which the public overestimate—is key. Furthermore, the issue of replacement is more salient and sensitive an electoral issue for Labour and the Liberal Democrats, with Conservative voters being more supportive of Trident than the average voter. Whether or not one agrees with Rifkind's interpretation of the data, which could be ascribed to wishful thinking on his part, the key point he makes is that if the debate about the UK's nuclear future focuses on the technical question of which posture or platform is best, then the Conservatives are likely to have their way.

Supporters of disarmament therefore need to find ways to clearly explain what it means for the UK to be a NWS and makes the issue visible and relevant to people's lives. Campaign groups such as CND (2014) and Global Zero (2014) have begun to address this by highlighting how many schools and hospitals could be built if governments decided not to waste money on nuclear weapons. Such arguments have gained weight given recent estimates suggesting that the whole life-cost of Successor may be over £200 billion, although it could be argued that even this figure does not reflect the wider costs of the UK remaining a NWS with Trident, given the national need to maintain a viable submarine industry (CND, 2016; Piper, 2015; Street, 2016). Similarly, the SNP's case for removing Trident 'weapons of mass

destruction' from Scottish territory and waters focused on cost, but also that Trident symbolised the 'democratic deficit' whereby Westminster imposed its policies on Scotland (Scottish National Party, 2013).

Elsewhere, a variety of UK-based analysts such as Professor Malcolm Chalmers (2013 i), Andrew Futter (2016), David Hambling (2016) as well as retired Rear Admiral Chris Parry (2015) and Lord Des Browne (Watt, 2015), alongside Bryan Clark (2015) in the US, have variously drawn attention to the possibility that submarines will in future be much more vulnerable to cyber-attacks and detection by underwater technologies and that ballistic missiles could even become obsolete. These points have again led to questioning concerning the wisdom of the UK building four new SSBNs. Yet whilst these arguments are important aspects of the nuclear debate, it is questionable whether, without a deeper appreciation of why elites value the UK's nuclear status and fear losing it, disarmament advocates will be able to craft successful political strategies. This means, for example, considering and providing an alternative to the broader political meanings and structures within which the UK's nuclear weapons are embedded, rather than just focusing on the weapons themselves.

The political complexities of the nuclear debate were shown when the SNP committed itself to remaining in NATO, which raised the difficult question of how Scotland could reject Trident on the one hand whilst accepting membership of an alliance with a nuclear first strike at the core of its military strategy (Carrell, 2012;

Whitaker, 2014). The issue of how a non-nuclear Britain would relate to a nuclear-armed NATO was also a vexing issue for the Labour party under Neil Kinnock, which was, until 1989, committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament and the removal of US bases.⁷⁷

The contradictions within Labour's position could not be sustained and led the party, after the 1987 election, to replace unilateralism with multilateralism, whereby the UK would only place its nuclear weapons in disarmament negotiations once the superpowers were ready to commit to abolition. The significance of this move was that Labour was not prepared to move towards the kind of neutralism that E.P. Thompson (1981: 27; 1987) understood nuclear disarmament to entail when he wrote of the need to end British subservience, by 'shaking off' US hegemony and 'reclaiming autonomy'. Similarly, for the SNP, whilst the removal of Trident represents independence from Westminster, independence from Washington and its nuclear weapons policies means renouncing membership of NATO, which has hitherto proved unacceptable.

The UK thus remains one of, if not the, most ardent promoters of NATO, with most defence and foreign policy experts seeing it as an essential pillar of security for Euro-Atlantic nations. Domestically, whilst vocal critics of the alliance exist within the

⁷⁷ According to Len Scott (2006: 695), Kinnock's rationale for British disarmament was 'presented as a contribution to quantitative and qualitative improvements in NATO conventional defences'. Moreover, the UK would press NATO to adopt a no first use policy.

Labour and Scottish National parties, for the most part it retains strong parliamentary support. This is despite evidence showing considerable public disquiet with the status quo, including a 2015 YouGov poll (2015) which found that a majority of swing Labour voters want the party to be 'less subservient to the USA', not 'get involved in American wars' and instead be 'more positive about Britain's role in Europe'. In response, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has argued that the alliance needs to be brought 'under democratic control' and consider carefully future eastwards expansion (Simons, 2015).

It is worth noting that in an article reflecting on the UK government's addiction to nuclear weapons, George Monbiot (2010) argues that the one force that could finally 'kill' Trident is the US. For only once the US has begun to dismantle its huge nuclear arsenal and 'ordered' the UK to follow suit would such disarmament occur. Recalcitrant parliamentary and public opinion in the UK thus 'counts for nothing'. An alternative to waiting for orders from the US is for the UK to, as Mark Curtis (2003: 436) argues, in a similar vein to Thompson, 'withdraw its general backing for Washington and instead pursue a policy of strategic non-cooperation'. Such a seismic shift, replacing 'a very well-entrenched, elitist, secretive and totalitarian domestic governance system' with a 'genuine popular democracy' will, for Curtis (ibid), only result from 'massive public pressure'.

In terms of the potential for a shift in politics and public opinion that would lead to such a transformation in the UK's international policy, a 2014 YouGov poll (Raines,

2015) found that a majority of the wider public thinks that the UK should aspire to be a 'great power' rather than accept that it is in decline. 61% of respondents also thought that NATO is either 'vital' or 'important' to UK security. A larger number of respondents thought that the UK should have closest ties with the EU (30%) rather than the US (25%), suggesting the European dimension of the alliance may be more important to the public. Overall, such findings suggest that the first job for those seeking to develop an alternative to Britain's current position is that they lead a public debate about what type of international behaviour and relationships would align best with the values and goals that voters most care about. The potential to do this is shown by Thomas Raines (2015: 2), who points out in his study of British attitudes to international relations that the British public are more focused on security questions closer to home, such as 'border protection and counterterrorism' than projecting power abroad.

Elsewhere, the individuals and groups working to increase public awareness of the economic, environmental and political costs and risks of the UK remaining a NWS and interventionist military power support such a democratic process by opening up British defence and foreign policy to some degree of transparency and accountability. Yet whilst progress has been made, several of the proposals made in the 1980s by civil society to increase access to information and public and parliamentary control over nuclear weapons have still yet to be realised (Elworthy,

1989: 175; Miall, 1987: 157).⁷⁸ Such democratic accountability is essential if the requisite pressure for nuclear disarmament and a sustainable approach to security is to be built over the long-term in the UK.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to assess the explanatory power of both the mainstream and realist and *institutional democratisation* perspectives on the causes and consequences of British nuclear possession and disarmament. For the UK case study, the security model is valuable in explaining the wartime origins of the British decision to acquire the bomb, but cannot satisfactorily outline the domestic and international factors driving the UK's current nuclear politics. For example, the security model focuses on external threats driving the UK's continued need for nuclear deterrence—such as those emanating from Russia and other so-called 'rogue states'. Yet in recent years the UK government has stated that it does not perceive a military threat to the UK from a major state, preferring to argue that future uncertainty necessitates maintaining the bomb as the ultimate insurance policy. Moreover, the UK defence and foreign policy establishment highly values its nuclear

⁷⁸ For example, Scilla Elworthy (1989: 175) outlined a series of recommendations, several of which require implementation today, including: i) the need for parliamentary committees to be given the necessary powers to 'monitor and control expenditure on nuclear weapons programmes' before key decisions are made ii) the need for the MoD to publish annually estimated expenditure on 'specific types of research, testing, development, pre-series production and full development' iii) the need for the MoD to disclose 'on what basis it provides information to industry, and under what clearance arrangements'.

status because it believes this elevates it beyond being another middle ranking power as well as offering moral and political support to the US in its management of international order. However, being such a close ally of the US brings with it its own dangers so that London's propensity to support Washington's military interventions and NATO expansion may generate a scenario whereby UK territory or interests are threatened by nuclear attack—which is a strong but unspoken reason why British defence and foreign policy-making elites continue to believe that the UK must persist in practicing nuclear deterrence.

The security model also has little to say about the important domestic factors driving the UK's continuing nuclear possession and the changes that need to take place within the UK for nuclear disarmament to become politically viable. *Institutional democratisation* does a better job in both these areas by highlighting the closed and secretive nature of UK nuclear weapons decision-making, how this connects to the UK's sizable 'warfare state' and the flaws within the UK's liberal democratic model, and the impact that nuclear possession has had on the British polity and political discourse. *Institutional democratisation* as a theory of political change also helps us imagine a path by which the UK could shift its defence and foreign policy away from power projection and nuclear possession and towards a conventional and non-offensive defence policy. By studying the domestic political scene, including industrial, economic, party political and factors, as well as public opinion, it is thus possible to propose how these might develop in future in ways that support nuclear disarmament action. For example, civil society has fought for decades for

information to be in the public domain so that the costs and risks of the UK's nuclear arsenal, including safety and environmental issues surrounding AWE, are widely known. Maintaining work of this kind as well as building social movements advancing an alternative international policy and *institutional democratisation* could harness existing public enthusiasm for nuclear disarmament and draw in new supporters.

Whilst it is therefore clear that there are significant barriers to *institutional democratisation* in the UK, including the grip the British guardianship has over nuclear weapons decision-making and the UK's subordinate relationship to the US—particularly regarding international policy—the potential exists for civil society to deepen British democracy and transform the UK's international posture in the short to medium term as a means to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament. Clearly, such a prospect frightens powerful supporters of the status quo, who seek to paint their opponents as threats to national security. Yet large sections of the British public favour scrapping nuclear weapons and the prospect of Trident's removal from Scotland remains a possibility as long as support for independence remains strong.

What should also be clear from the preceding discussion is that it is highly unlikely that British military and political elites will, of their own accord, relinquish nuclear weapons—as proposed by the *guardianship* approach to nuclear arms control and disarmament. British defence and foreign policy elites are so tightly bound by history, identity and established structures of power, including the nuclear relationships with France and the US, that the costs of relinquishing the political

power vested in Trident are too great for them to contemplate, whilst the political benefits at home and abroad are not sufficiently attractive. At the same time, the UK has come closest of the NWS to unilateral disarmament and the current Labour leadership is particularly comfortable with this notion, despite dissent within the party and support for nuclear possession by some unions and their members. It is also possible that significant cost escalation for the Successor programme, industrial troubles and technological developments (including in cyber and underwater warfare) may combine to make current nuclear platforms (SSBNs) ineffective and vulnerable from both a political and military viewpoint, so that alternative policy options—including disarmament—become more inviting over time.

Leaving such technocratic scenarios aside, British nuclear disarmament would likely only come about as a result of two different developments, which may be complementary depending on how they emerge. Firstly, a disarmament initiative led by the US, for example on a multilateral basis, involving Russia and with Chinese and French support, would very likely lead to British participation. As previously outlined, popular struggle towards democratic control of state institutions in the US is essential if the power of its nuclear weapons establishment is to be challenged and controlled and nuclear weapons delegitimised pending disarmament. Secondly, if a popular domestic movement emerges which is committed to democratising British institutions, is capable of challenging the power of defence and foreign policy elites and is able to win control over nuclear weapons decision-making, the possibility of irreversible disarmament measures being enacted becomes feasible. Such a

disarmament process would also require an alternate vision for Britain's role in the world, so that collective and non-military approaches to security—with a focus on human rights, as well as conflict prevention and resolution—are prioritised and international law is adhered to regarding the threat or use of force. Whilst the difficult question of the UK's relationship with NATO would need to be resolved, closer engagement with international institutions whose values accord with the vision of a NFWF, such as the EU, OSCE and UN, could assist the UK in making the transition to FNWS status.

Chapter Six: France

Introduction

This chapter assesses the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation* and other mainstream and realist approaches regarding the causes and consequences of French nuclear possession and disarmament. As with the British case study, the chapter proceeds in several sections, beginning by comparing and contrasting different historical views on France's nuclear experience since World War Two before moving on to discuss modern day French nuclear politics. Whilst there is still a significant range of data available in English covering French nuclear politics, this is less than for the UK and US for several reasons. These include the language barrier, the limited size of the audience for this subject beyond France and the fact that for several decades there has been a national pro-bomb consensus in France—though questioning of France's nuclear status has become greater in recent years. For these reasons, as well as the fact that the French nuclear arsenal is much smaller than that of Russia and the US and the comparatively limited nature of France's power projection capabilities—which means that France does not play as great a role in other state's strategic calculus—this chapter is shorter than those on the UK, US and Russia. Having outlined French nuclear politics in this chapter, Chapter Eight then contextualises France's responsibility for disarmament action alongside the other NWS and makes appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

The first section of this chapter summarises the mainstream and realist approaches explored in Chapter Two in relation to France's particular experience as a NWS and assesses the merits of the security model as applied to France. This is principally done by placing the French development of nuclear weapons within the context of relevant historical events from the mid to late 20th and early 21st century—focusing, in particular, on the Cold War, where France positioned itself as a world power capable of deterring any threat to its national independence and security by virtue of its nuclear status. I also explore other justifications for France retaining the bomb and arguments against disarmament made by prominent advocates of nuclear possession in relation to relevant views on the origins and meaning of the Cold War.

The second section of this chapter then assesses the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation* regarding the causes and consequences of French nuclear possession and disarmament by developing the domestic politics model. In doing so, official justifications for France's nuclear status are challenged and the limitations in the mainstream and realist literature's explanation of French nuclear politics identified. A brief exploration of critical perspectives on the Cold War and French global strategy is also presented to identify historical approaches that support the specific claims and ideas of *institutional democratisation*. Previous work focusing on France's domestic nuclear politics is discussed here in order to specify the wider impact nuclear possession has had on the French polity, relate this to criticisms of France's record as a liberal democracy and its maintenance of a sizable and costly military establishment, and highlight existing scholarly arguments compatible with the main contentions of this thesis. As we shall see, the French case is particularly relevant to the claims made by *institutional democratisation* given the

existence of what several scholars refer to as France's 'nuclear monarchy', which was initiated by President Charles de Gaulle and which has shaped the nature of the French state and Presidency to this day.

Having provided this historical overview of the different approaches to French nuclear possession and disarmament, the third section of this chapter goes into more detail concerning current obstacles to and opportunities for *institutional democratisation* in France by reviewing modern day French politics in relation to the nuclear question. A range of evidence is presented to show both how wide the democratic deficit is in France and the extent to which this is reflected in and relates to the gap between French public opinion on nuclear arms control and disarmament, and the actions of elite actors and the French government. For example, the French political establishment maintains an apparent consensus on nuclear policy that makes the prospects for French nuclear disarmament appear distant, particularly when compared to the UK.

This section moves on to consider how to move beyond the status quo, investigating what France can do to advance nuclear disarmament, nationally and internationally. For example, the present state of the French peace and disarmament movement and public opinion concerning France's role in the world is considered to explore civil society's potential contribution to disarmament initiatives and how these may develop and be strengthened as part of a wider democratisation process. Potentially conducive developments in international security that will support such domestic

political change highlighted in the expert literature are also discussed, to illustrate how domestic and international nuclear politics interact. Given France's role as a major military power, arms exporter and ally of the US in managing global order, French nuclear disarmament—as part of a new approach to international policy prioritising human rights and international law—would likely have an important impact on both Western and global nuclear politics as well as enriching domestic freedoms and democratic standards in France.

6.1 Mainstream and realist perspectives on the causes and consequences of French nuclear possession and disarmament

Realist explanations of the French decision to develop nuclear weapons, for Scott Sagan (1996: 58, 76-77), are 'very simple' and emphasise the military threat posed by the USSR from the 1950s onwards as well as the reduced 'credibility' of US extended deterrence guarantees following the USSR developing the ability to 'threaten retaliation against the United States'. As Beatrice Heuser (1998: 77) notes, President Charles de Gaulle is thus often lauded for 'presiding over France's acquisition of nuclear weapons', which restored French sovereignty, independence and freedom after the Nazi occupation in World War Two. According to the security model, France's desire to keep hold of the bomb, Sagan (Ibid: 77) adds, was then reinforced by the experience of Suez in 1956 when Paris had to 'withdraw its military intervention forces after a nuclear threat from Russia and under U.S. economic pressure'. By becoming a nuclear power, and thus a leader in global affairs once

more, France would ensure the national weakness displayed during this time was never repeated.

Wilfrid L. Kohl (1971: 8) highlights other reasons why influential groups within the Fourth Republic—technocrats, military officers and politicians—pushed for the development of the bomb, ranging from:

France's declining influence in NATO and the frustrations caused by the loss of her colonial territories to a desire for the modern weapons for the French army to restore its morale, to offset the effects of German rearmament, and to diminish France's dependence upon American military protection.

France would thus be able to challenge US 'hegemony', rising to a status equal to the UK and above West Germany (Journe, 2011: 126; Tertrais, 2004: 61; Yost, 2004: 224). The French leadership role in Western Europe would also be retained, whilst it strove to unify the European continent 'from the Atlantic to the Urals', promote détente with Communist countries and secure an independent position for Europe in world politics (Kohl, 1971: 6; Tertrais, 2004: 58).

Supporters of France's nuclear status have been able to resist calls for disarmament at home and abroad, observers such as Oliver Debozy (1995: 34) and Michael M.

Harrison (1981: 261) argue, because whilst the French left opposed the Gaullist vision and supported nuclear disarmament in the 1960s, since the 1970s there has been a broad national consensus in favour of France's security and defence policies, including the retention of nuclear arms. Heuser (1998: 81) therefore usefully points out that, in response to claims that the French President's 'monopoly control' of the bomb was 'illegitimate because anti-democratic', nuclear enthusiasts argue that the President is authorised to use nuclear weapons as an enactment of the popular will in national elections.

Following the end of the Cold War, Yost (2004: 209) claims that the French reconfigured their nuclear forces to deter two different threats, posed by: i) the re-emergence of a major state (potentially China or Russia) ii) a regional power armed with WMD. The focus on the latter led President Chirac (2001) to emphasise the need to destroy the 'political, military and economic power centres' of an aggressor, requiring France to acquire, as Yost (2004: 218) puts it, a wider range of nuclear options 'including more precise and more discriminate strike capabilities' which 'explicitly' lowered the threshold for use (Journe, 2011: 141). Elsewhere, *Libération* explained that the aim of these new capabilities was to be able to 'decapitate' a regime, 'without killing millions of innocent civilians' (Acronym, 2006).

The French 2013 Defence White Paper (2013: 73), described the nation's nuclear weapons policy as follows:

Our deterrence capability is strictly defensive. The use of nuclear weapons would only be conceivable in extreme circumstances of legitimate self-defence. In this respect, nuclear deterrence is the ultimate guarantee of the security, protection and independence of the Nation’.

This statement is consistent with the long-standing French concept of ‘non-use’, an idea not to be confused with no first use, which France rejects. Rather, non-use is a means by which the French government can deploy advanced nuclear capabilities whilst portraying its nuclear arsenal as an essential tool to prevent—rather than fight—wars. Moreover, as Yost (2004: 223) explains, non-use provides the French with political advantages, such as being able to remain in NATO and yet independent from it, and the US, in terms of nuclear deterrence strategy. France has thus never been a member of NATO’s nuclear planning group (NPG).⁷⁹

In recent times the French bomb has also been presented as vital to protect the nation’s ‘vital interests’, although as Yost (Ibid: 219) points out, what these mean ‘depends on the President’. For example, former President Jacques Chirac outlined his belief that ‘the integrity of our territory, the protection of our population’ and ‘the free exercise of our sovereignty’ were at the core of France’s vital interests. He later added that ‘safeguarding our strategic supplies’ and ‘the defence of allied

⁷⁹ According to NATO’s website (2010), the NPG ‘provides a forum in which NATO member countries can participate in the development of the Alliance’s nuclear policy and in decisions on NATO’s nuclear posture, irrespective of whether or not they themselves maintain nuclear weapons’.

countries', could be invoked in the event of 'an unbearable act of aggression, threat or blackmail perpetrated against these interests' (Acronym, 2006). To imagine the emergence of an international political environment in which there is 'no foreseeable major threat' to French 'vital interests' is thus to imagine, according to Tertrais (2009 ii: 4), a 'profound transformation of international relations' approaching some sort of 'global democratic peace' where the use of military force is constrained by international law.

In terms of arms control and disarmament, the French government claims that it has a 'unique, exemplary record in nuclear disarmament' and has taken 'significant unilateral steps' to abide by its NPT commitments, both in terms of nuclear and general and complete disarmament (MDN/MAEE, 2009). As proof of this, French officials cite several actions, including President Sarkozy's announcement in 2008 of: 'a reduction by one third in the number of nuclear weapons, missiles and aircraft of the French airborne component' and the 2008 disarmament action plan it presented with European nations, endorsed by 27 EU Heads of State and Government (Ibid).

Given the importance of nuclear weapons for France' Tertrais (2009 i: 16-23), therefore posits that some sort of 'extraordinary' shift in the international political environment would be required to could push France towards zero, so that disarmament is an 'extreme hypothesis'. He also excludes the possibility of domestic political forces pushing for zero because, he argues, France 'has never had a

significant anti-nuclear movement' (Tertrais, 2007: 261). Furthermore, today the Green party 'is the only significant force calling for nuclear disarmament' and the French public is in favour of retaining a nuclear arsenal. Having reviewed three possible scenarios by which France might 'reduce to zero', Tertrais (2009 i: 19) concludes that:

the only credible circumstances where France would be willing to seriously consider the global abolition of nuclear weapons are those in which there is no foreseeable major threat against its vital interests and those of its European partners. However, it would be difficult for Paris to stay away from a coordinated US-Russia-China initiative to begin negotiations for a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons from all nations.

To unpack this a little, absent domestic political pressure altering the power elite's cost/benefit analysis regarding the value of nuclear weapons, they will continue to be deployed to protect France's 'vital interests'. The needs of French national security are thus an unquestioned constant, so that nuclear deterrence is justifiable and pragmatic. Such *security first* logic, driven by a belief in French exceptionalism, provides a useful insight into how France's establishment—at the helm of a 'leading nation' with a 'civilizing mission'—sees itself (Moran & Cottee, 2011: 344). It is therefore posited that France's nuclear needs will only diminish when other states act to 'roll back' proliferation and Russia becomes a democracy 'in the Western camp'. The continuation of US extended deterrence to Europe is also seen as

necessary to provide the requisite security guarantees (Tertrais, 2007: 269; 2009 i: 17). Alternatively, if the major nuclear powers delegitimise and relinquish their arsenals, this would lead to 'strong pressures from within the EU for France to follow suit' (Tertrais, 2009 i: 18).⁸⁰ The belief that the US and Russia have prime responsibility for moving the world towards zero is a long-standing French position, alongside the need for them to establish limits on defensive systems, for example, BMD and reductions to conventional forces (Yost, 1994: 266).

6.2 Critical perspectives on the causes and consequences of French nuclear possession and disarmament

This section follows Sagan (1996: 77) in arguing that the realist understanding of French nuclear possession outlined above 'does not stand up very well against either existing evidence or logic'. The reasons why the security model is insufficient shall be outlined below and *institutional democratisation* shall be explored as a means of providing an improved explanation of the causes and consequences of French nuclear possession and disarmament. Supporting evidence for *institutional democratisation*, which focuses on French domestic politics, is strong and can be found in several scholarly and expert works. For example, whilst contemporary political analysts may disagree over whether France should continue to possess

⁸⁰ It is fair to say that in such a situation, France would not be able to extract any of its usual political leverage from possessing a nuclear arsenal, making it redundant.

nuclear weapons or commit to disarmament, there is agreement over the fact that French nuclear weapons decision-making has always been made by a tiny group of officials, initially technocrats and then political elites, for whom these weapons are of supreme importance.

Bruno Tertrais (2007: 257; 2011) therefore observes that France may be ‘the only country whose political system proceeds from the possession of nuclear weapons’. Tertrais follows Samy Cohen’s (1986) description of France as a ‘nuclear monarchy’, and states that nuclear weapons policymaking has actually become more centralised since the bomb was acquired. Meanwhile, Jean-Marie Collin, a researcher at the Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security, has stated that nuclear deterrence is ‘in the DNA’ of France’s top political elites.⁸¹ Elsewhere, Beatrice Heuser (1998: 90) makes the complementary point that the bomb presents a unifying feature of national life in the French Fifth Republic as part of successive government’s ‘drive towards centralisation’. Securing a national consensus on the ‘two pillars of France’s defence, conscription and the bomb’ was therefore, Heuser (Ibid: 91) argues, ‘crucial for domestic reasons’.

As previously noted, France’s nuclear arsenal—which came to be known as the *force de frappe*, meaning strike force—is strongly associated with the legacy of Charles De Gaulle, who established the Fifth Republic and was its first President. Endowed with

⁸¹ Interview: JMC

the authority to use nuclear weapons by the 1958 Constitution, De Gaulle dominated French foreign and defence decision-making for more than a decade (Tertrais, 2007: 257). Yet Heuser (1998: 98) provocatively argues that rather than De Gaulle's acquisition of the bomb enjoying popular support, during his presidency,

the majority of the French population was against the development of a national nuclear force, and debates about nuclear weapons in the National Assembly and in the press were heated. De Gaulle carried out his costly programme against formidable opposition.

Moreover, according to Gabrielle Hecht (1998: 63) and Hugh Miall (1987: 64), the key decisions allowing the French to test a nuclear bomb in 1960 were taken by the Administrator General of the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique, Pierre Guillaumat in the 1950s.⁸² Guillaumat pushed for the production of weapons grade plutonium, seeing the CEA's work as a symbol of 'technological prowess' and a means by which France could regain the 'national radiance' it had lost following the humiliation of World War Two (Hecht, 1998: 63).

Crucially, the high degree of financial and political autonomy enjoyed by the CEA

⁸² The CEA was founded in 1945 as a state agency tasked with the development of atomic research and technology. Notably, Vernance Journe (2011: 128) takes a different view, arguing that the CEA were 'strongly opposed to any military use of nuclear energy', and that it was actually the French ministers of defence and atomic affairs who made an early push for the bomb.

during the unstable years of the Fourth Republic, which saw twenty prime ministers come and go, meant that the decision by the French government to acquire the bomb in 1960 only ratified a pre-existing bureaucratic process (Hecht, 1998: 74; Hymans, 2012: 34). Where De Gaulle broke with the previous regime and made his own mark, according to Kohl (1971: 6), was in making France's nuclear arsenal principally a 'political instrument to support his independent foreign policies which sought to change the European and international system and France's role in it'. To this extent, an approach to the French bomb informed by the principles of *institutional democratisation* is able to accept and incorporate the idea of De Gaulle seeking nuclear weapons for nationalistic reasons, but would also highlight the domestic political goals behind his and other elite's decision-making. Thus, rather than the bomb just enhancing France's political and military position within NATO, De Gaulle sought to use the new technology to restore French 'grandeur', both to prevent France moving from being a 'world empire' to 'a backward colonized nation' and to inspire and unite the French people in support of a revived state apparatus (Hecht, 1998: 62).

However, the end of the Cold War represented a 'critical juncture' for French elites as one of the main pretexts for substantial military spending and nuclear deterrence—the Soviet threat to Europe—disappeared overnight (Marcussen et al, 1999). The security model's explanation regarding why France continued to possess nuclear weapons thus faces a serious challenge here. Yet, as Heuser (1998: 127, 143) notes, France's nuclear deterrence policy has historically been aimed 'in all

directions of the compass' and thus, on the international level, related to long-term power balancing rather than ephemeral ideology. This includes 'resisting the domination of the US' which, she states, has been seen by 'governments since de Gaulle' as 'France's principal rival'.

Yet France's desire for greater European integration from the 1980s onwards was increasingly at odds with its competitive 'nuclear nationalism' and its relationship with NATO needed to be resolved. Proponents of the nuclear force, such as Debouzy (1995: 37, 69) therefore argued in the mid-1990s that unless France rethought the purpose of its nuclear weapons—for example, by giving it a 'European role', including cooperation with the UK and Germany to develop a new system of deterrence—that it might 'slowly fade into irrelevance'.

Whilst France and the UK have become increasingly close partners in this field, leading to a 2010 treaty on nuclear cooperation, European states have indicated their preference for the security guarantees offered by the US, under the auspices of NATO, to the idea of relying on France for a 'Europeanized' nuclear deterrent (Sloan, 1997). At the same time, EU member states have in recent years also developed a Common Foreign and Security Policy prioritising non-proliferation and disarmament (Grand, 2010). Despite these moves, between 1995 and 2007, under the Presidency of Jacques Chirac, nuclear weapons took on an enlarged role for France. Chirac restarted nuclear testing in 1995, in the face of much domestic and international criticism, including opposition from 60% of the French public, before deciding to

ratify the CTBT in 1998 (Moran & Cottee, 2011: 347). Indeed, the French government's approach to nuclear tests reveals much about the attitude of it and other NWS to the CTBT and the idea of nuclear disarmament more generally. For example, in 1994, French Prime Minister Balladur said that the CTBT 'must not in any way envisage the elimination of nuclear weapons or seek to undermine the status of the nuclear powers' (Jabko & Weber, 2007: 145).

In terms of recent nuclear politics and the prospects for disarmament, Presidents Sarkozy (New York Times, 2008) and Hollande (Le Monde, 2012; NTI, 2013) reiterated the need for nuclear weapons, the former describing them as the 'nation's life insurance policy' and the latter as both a 'protection against all threats' and 'an element that fosters peace'. Despite this, several scholars have argued that the future of France's nuclear status is in jeopardy. For example, Tertrais (2007: 270) recently stated that whilst France will remain strongly committed to the bomb for the foreseeable future, this direction will become more difficult because 'the ability to maintain and adapt the French deterrent is weakening'. He therefore concludes that 'serious political will, as well as significant resources human, technological, budgetary' will be necessary if France is to retain its nuclear arsenal (Ibid). Similarly, Matthew Fargo (2012: 63) has written that the British and French nuclear forces can only be considered as 'specious symbols of their international prestige, vestiges of a bygone era', whilst Clement Larrauri (2014: 10) posits that France's nuclear arsenal has become 'less and less close to the population's fears, pride and interest' shifting from being 'an ideological product of consensus to a passive legacy'.

In terms of domestic social and political forces within France that are supportive of nuclear disarmament, the lack of democracy, transparency and accountability surrounding the French nuclear weapons system from its birth has significantly hampered public awareness and engagement. For example, former French defence minister Paul Quilès (2010) has described how neither the French parliament nor the mainstream media have sought to engage in a serious debate concerning nuclear weapons. He thus proposes that a ‘fake consensus’ exists regarding the *force de frappe* given that the issue is handled with ‘silence, approximations, counter-truths, slogans, authoritarian arguments’, amounting to a ‘French fib’ (Ibid: 20). This assessment, whilst covering one policy area, nonetheless sits uncomfortably alongside evaluations provided by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2016) and Freedom House (2017), which find that France generally scores highly across a range of indicators concerning democratic standards and civic rights.

In terms of why the French ‘fib’ exists, Heuser (1998: 90-91) highlights the French ruling elite’s ‘fear’ of ‘strong popular disapproval’ and ‘internal discord’ given the nation’s ‘stormy political history’, which may lead to a divergence between the public and the President’s ‘will’. In order to explore whether such a divergence exists today, the next section discusses whether the French citizenry are more apathetic or disapproving concerning the bomb and what this means for the French political system—in particular the Presidency. For example, whilst the majority of the French political establishment remains firmly wedded to nuclear weapons, there are some signs—such as recent support for nuclear disarmament from retired political and

military officials, civil society and public opinion—indicating that anti-nuclear voices may be growing louder in France.

6.3 French nuclear politics today

Having introduced the perspective of *institutional democratisation* in relation to the history of the French bomb, we may now outline a fuller analysis to explain how this concept applies to modern day French nuclear politics. For example, drawing on relevant scholarship and expert commentary, we will review the national and international political developments that could enable France to move towards nuclear disarmament over the medium to long term. Before discussing these processes, it is crucial to emphasise again that the French political system is set up so that nuclear weapons decision-making is highly centralised within the office of the President. Thus, when anyone describes ‘Paris’ or ‘France’ making a decision on nuclear weapons, they are really talking about a ‘power elite’ comprised of ‘a handful of political leaders and officials’ (Tertrais, 2007: 258; Nectoux, 1986: 184).

At the same time, Presidents have made their own mark on France’s nuclear weapons system, according to their own beliefs and interests, showing that unilateral action is possible. For example, President Chirac took the decision to close

and dismantle the Pierrelatte uranium enrichment plant in 1996.⁸³ Furthermore, a decision to move to zero would clearly require Presidential acquiescence or active support, and signify a radical change to the political structure of the Fifth Republic given that any President who made such a move would be divesting their office of immense physical and symbolic power built up over several decades.

Domestic opposition to any disarmament initiatives would also likely emanate from powerful institutions with a stake in the nuclear weapons business, namely the 'nuclear community', including the CEA, the 'defence community', including the Ministry of Defence and armed forces and 'delivery systems manufacturers' (Nectoux, 1986: 154). To consider how these political processes—domestic and international—might lead to French nuclear disarmament is therefore to consider both how political developments and pressure might alter the cost/benefit analysis of the small group that controls French nuclear weapons decision-making and how the French political system might itself change as a result of the process leading to disarmament.

Turning to the prospect of changes to France's domestic political scene, Jean-Marie Collin has proposed that France could only achieve the complete elimination of its nuclear arsenal 'as a result of parliamentary pressure and public opinion'.⁸⁴ Yet, as

⁸³ Interview: MT

⁸⁴ Interview: JMC

previously mentioned, proponents of disarmament such as Quiles (2010) and civil society groups such as Mouvement De La Paix (2014) have drawn attention to the ‘fake consensus’ on nuclear issues in France, which has been brought about by a system in which there is little opportunity for societal debate or parliamentary influence over nuclear weapons decisions. As Tertrais (2011 ii) himself acknowledges, US support for the French nuclear programme was kept quiet in order not to interfere with the Gaullist narrative of nuclear weapons being a symbol of French independence, a myth widely recognised as crucial to the reconstruction of France’s identity as a global power after World War Two.

In terms of national self-image today, most of the political establishment takes pride in France being a leading military power, remaining one of the world’s largest spenders on defence as well as a major arms exporter (SIPRI, 2014 i). As its most recent Defence White Paper (2013) indicates, France sees itself as having responsibilities on several fronts, which require strong conventional military capabilities. France has sought to strengthen both NATO and the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy, take an increased responsibility for security in Africa and ‘contribute to the stability’ of the Middle East and Persian Gulf (Watanabe, 2013). According to opinion polls, recent French military interventions in these areas have received growing and majority public support, as has the idea that France continue to act forcefully on the world stage, which may be explained by deep anxiety regarding Islamist terrorism and the perceived effectiveness and legitimacy

of these actions (Chevalier, 2011; Dinmore, 2011; de Durand & Pertusot, 2013; Dahlgreen, 2015).

However, scholars also argue that, for French defence and foreign policy-makers, 'the end of the Cold War symbolized the ultimate failure of the Gaullist and nationalist nation state identity' and that 'the chapter of Gaullism in French history is now closing' (Marcussen et al, 1999: 630; Zaretsky, 2010). These elites have instead adopted a European identity and closer integration with EU partners, a move that has facilitated a return to NATO's military command structure—with public support, and cooperation with the UK on nuclear weapons (Crumley, 2009; Moran & Cottee, 2009).⁸⁵ Yet, as described above, France has also sought to retain a strong conventional military profile leading to discontent in the military (particularly the Army) and in Parliament concerning the 'heavy burden of nuclear expenses in the defence budget', which were heightened by the austerity measures taken after the 2008 economic crisis (MacLachlan & Hibbs, 2006; Tertrais, 2006; Collin, 2013).

These post-Cold War trends could help explain why one recent opinion poll indicated that the French public may be more opposed to nuclear possession than is

⁸⁵ According to Bruno Tertrais (2012: 16), as well as financial motives, Paris embarked on cooperation with the UK as it is 'interested in contributing to the continued existence, solidity and independence of another European nuclear power'.

commonly thought (IFOP, 2012).⁸⁶ In addition, as Heuser (1998: 89) points out, opinion polls since 1980 have shown that large sections of the French public have been 'opposed to the use of nuclear weapons in defence of France, even if foreign forces were invading French soil'. Other forms of opposition to nuclear weapons came in the form of the 2009 statement in favour of a NWFW by former Prime Ministers Alain Juppe and Rocard, Former Defence Minister Alain Richard, and retired General Bernard Norlain (2009). However, some, such as Therese Delpech (2005) and Vernance Journe (2011: 140), have argued that these (and earlier) interventions have not made a significant impact on the public or the powers that be.⁸⁷ This may be because, as former French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine notes, that the French public 'do not follow foreign policy very closely' and that those issues which do resonate 'come down to a few images and symbols' (Ford, 2005). One of the most important symbolic moments being the French government's opposition to the invasion of Iraq, which corresponded with French public opinion (Boston, 2003).

Other groups that have become more active on nuclear issues include Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). For example, in May 2014 two PNND (2014) representatives briefed France's National Assembly Defence Committee on the 'economy and utility of nuclear weapons, the need to re-evaluate nuclear deterrence, and the universal obligation to achieve

⁸⁶ According to the IFOP (2012) poll when asked 'are you in favor or against the fact that France might renew and modernize its atomic weapons (submarines, missiles, etc.)', 64% of respondents said they were against.

⁸⁷ Interview: MT

nuclear disarmament’, the first such briefing by members of civil society since the establishment of the Fifth Republic. Whilst this initiative is a small step it does correspond with the argument that domestic political pressure towards nuclear disarmament will likely need to be part of a larger democratising force, given the lack of sustained public attention given to this issue. For example, this could be part of the more general decentralisation of decision-making on defence and foreign policy, so that they are not solely based in the Elysee Palace.

Such a wider democratic revival is also shown to be necessary judging by recent studies concerning the health of French democracy. For example, in 2016 the Economist Intelligence Unit (2016) downgraded France in its Democracy Index to the status of a ‘flawed democracy’. Problems with the French political system are also shown in recent polling figures from Ipsos which found that ‘only 8% of voters have confidence in political parties, fewer than one in five trust MPs and only 28% the institution of parliament’ whilst ‘nearly eight in 10 agreed that the system of democracy malfunctions in France as it isn’t representative of voters’ ideas’ (Nardelli, 2015). Given such popular dissatisfaction with France’s current political model and ambivalence regarding nuclear possession and use, the seeds of a social movement to emerge capable of implementing *institutional democratisation*—which may directly or indirectly support nuclear disarmament—exists, but will need to be carefully cultivated over the medium to long term if the many obstacles built into the French social and political establishment are to be successfully challenged and overcome.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored different views on French nuclear politics in order to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the mainstream, realist and *institutional democratisation* perspectives on the causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament. Ultimately, for this case study, the security model has only limited value in explaining French decision-making in this area because the Soviet nuclear threat was by no means the only factor motivating France's pursuit of the bomb. Moreover, the end of the Cold War and improvements in relations between the West and Russia opened up the question of why France, if the security model was accurate, should keep hold of its nuclear arsenal. In response, supporters of French deterrence argued that France and its vital interests continued to face serious and diverse threats from abroad. Some also argued that the end of the Cold War and the move to European integration changed France's political and security environment in a fundamental way, so that the original Gaullist design for the bomb as a revisionist tool for changing the European and international system, and France's independent role in it, had been superceded.

French nuclear deterrence is thus now, according to its proponents, intended to contribute to the security of NATO and Europe through war prevention, whilst budgetary pressures and the desire for a fellow NWS in Europe have also pushed France into nuclear cooperation with the UK. Yet despite their case for continued nuclear possession appearing to be significantly undermined following the end of the

Cold War, advocates of the bomb—such as Tertrais—appear not to be concerned about the near-term prospects of French nuclear disarmament. This is at least in part because they believe that the elimination of the French bomb would require far-reaching and far-off changes in international politics and security and because of the limited political support for disarmament that exists within France.

Whilst authors such as Tertrais take us further than most other mainstream and realist authors in examining how domestic and international politics interact to drive French nuclear possession and stymie nuclear disarmament efforts, the analysis provided by *institutional democratisation* remains valuable in helping us imagine the circumstances by which France may eventually relinquish the bomb. To begin with, focusing on the domestic front allows us to consider the political aims and interests of French decision-making elites in relation to their acquisition of the bomb. For example, after the national trauma of World War Two, the leaders of the Fifth Republic sought to reestablish France's position as an independent, sovereign nation—strategically separate from the US—and unite the nation behind the Presidency. Nuclear possession was seen as a means to accomplish all these goals—despite significant public and party political opposition to the bomb. Whilst some mainstream and realist works consider these ambitions, they are not presented as primary factors for France possessing the bomb, but rather as secondary issues.

Institutional democratisation does a better job here by emphasising the integral role that nuclear possession plays in the French political system—particularly the office

of the President—as summed up by the widely accepted concept of France being a ‘nuclear monarchy’. Given the structural implications of the bomb for French governance, it is clear that the incrementalism proposed by the *guardianship* approach is insufficient, so that there will likely need to be significant political change on the domestic and international fronts if the French nuclear arsenal is to be eliminated. The concept of *institutional democratisation*, as applied to this case study, also focuses on the ideas and beliefs of France’s power elite, the majority of whom believe that nuclear weapons continue to be the cornerstone of national security, helping to ensure continuity and stability—and thus prevent a return to political turmoil—at home.

Financial and political resources have therefore been made available to modernise and optimise the *force de frappe* to ensure its deployment for the foreseeable future. This continuity of French nuclear weapons policy also reflects the more general continuity of French national strategic culture as proposed by Heuser. French decision makers see France as a global power with attendant responsibilities based on their nation’s ‘vital interests’, which require the ability to project power to key areas of the world. But they also recognise the important role this grandiose self-image can play in binding the nation together behind the President given his or her role as the ‘nuclear monarch’.

Warnings that France’s nuclear arsenal may fall victim to structural disarmament or simply fade into irrelevance, would therefore appear to have been heeded and

addressed by those interested in and responsible for its reproduction, though it is unclear for how long the French nuclear weapons complex can continue to be supported given its size and expense. Meanwhile, the pragmatic changes to optimise France's nuclear force, partly chosen and partly forced upon decision makers by circumstance, were sold to the world, rather disingenuously, as examples of France's commitment to disarmament. In addition, there are some signs of a growing questioning of France's nuclear status amongst elites and the public. Given France's political system and its situation internationally, sincere French progress towards complete nuclear disarmament in the long-term would therefore likely require some combination of the following: substantially increased domestic agitation, focused on improving the political system's democracy, transparency and accountability in order to initiate public and parliamentary engagement on nuclear issues; increased political pressure for France to commit to nuclear disarmament from its key European partners and global civil society; improvements to international security, including on non-proliferation and regional conflict resolution; further reductions to the arsenals of Russia and the US.

Chapter Seven: China

Introduction

This chapter examines *institutional democratisation* and other mainstream and realist approaches in terms of their explanatory power relating to the causes and consequences of Chinese nuclear possession and disarmament. As with the British and French case studies, the chapter proceeds in several sections, beginning by comparing and contrasting different views on China's nuclear experience since the 1960s before moving on to discuss modern day Chinese nuclear politics. Whilst there is a growing range of data available in English covering Chinese nuclear politics, this is less than for the UK and US case studies for several reasons. These include the language barrier, the limited size of the audience for this subject outside a specialist Chinese and Western audience—in addition to the understandably closed nature of this subject given Chinese authoritarianism. For these reasons, as well as the fact that the Chinese nuclear arsenal is much smaller than that of Russia and the US, and the relatively limited nature of China's power projection capabilities and ambitions—so that overall China plays a growing but still lesser role in most other state's strategic calculus—this chapter is shorter than the US and Russia case studies. Having outlined Chinese nuclear politics in this chapter, Chapter Eight then contextualises China's responsibility for disarmament action alongside the other NWS and outlines appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

The first section of this chapter examines the mainstream and realist approaches explored in Chapter Two and assesses the merits of the security model in relation to China's particular experience as a NWS. This is principally done by placing China's development of nuclear weapons within the context of relevant historical events from the mid to late 20th and early 21st century—focusing, in particular, on the Cold War, where China positioned itself as a regional power capable of deterring threats to its national independence and security by virtue of its nuclear status.

It is important to note upfront that the evidence for *institutional democratisation* is, compared to the other NWS case studies, less compelling for the Chinese example. This is firstly because the security model, as utilised by mainstream and realist works, explains how the perceived US threat both drove the Chinese decision to acquire the bomb and remains the primary driver of China's deterrence strategy. Moreover, unlike Russia and the US, China has maintained a relatively small nuclear arsenal for several reasons, including Beijing's hitherto limited international ambitions and resources and its belief in minimal deterrence as a sufficient defensive strategy. This meant that the bomb did not take on the same kind of significance for Chinese elites and domestic politics as the other NWS, something which can also partly be explained by Beijing's gradually less hostile attitude to the US and retreat from a revolutionary international policy over the course of the Cold War (Horsburgh, 2015: 158).

The second section then assesses the explanatory power of *institutional*

democratisation in relation to the causes and consequences of Chinese nuclear possession and disarmament. In doing so, official justifications for China's nuclear status are explored and the limitations in the mainstream and realist literature's explanation of Chinese nuclear politics considered. To the extent that *institutional democratisation* and the domestic politics model are usefully applicable, I draw on the work of experts in Chinese nuclear history and politics, such as Jeffrey Lewis, Nicola Horsburgh and others, to specify the wider impact nuclear possession has had on modern China. More specifically, I introduce discussion of how domestic elite actors and groups shape Chinese defence and foreign policy, including on nuclear issues, to examine the barriers to institutional change pursuant to disarmament. Having discussed different theories of Chinese nuclear possession and disarmament, the third section of this chapter reviews modern day Chinese politics in relation to nuclear matters and goes into more detail concerning the current obstacles to and opportunities for *institutional democratisation* in China.

7.1 Mainstream and realist perspectives on the causes and consequences of Chinese nuclear possession and disarmament

Mainstream and realist explanations of the origins of Chinese nuclear possession principally focus on external security challenges. Thus, as analysts such as Lu Hui (Wortzel, 2007: 28) and Scott Sagan (1996: 58-59) have explained, China began its nuclear programme in response to nuclear threats from the US during the Korean War and the later Taiwan Straits crisis in the mid-1950s. Elsewhere, Nicola

Horsburgh (2015: 60) states that these factors led to 'Chinese attitudes towards nuclear weapons' changing 'dramatically in the early to mid-1950s' as Beijing's 'technological weakness' was exposed by Washington's 'development of tactical nuclear weapons, the thermonuclear hydrogen weapon and the fusion-fission weapon'. Around this time, the US also chose to deploy its tactical nuclear weapons to bases near China, 'in South Korea, Taiwan, Guam, and Hawaii' (Ibid). Moreover, as Avery Goldstein (1992: 494) notes, deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations during the 1960s increased the perceived value of a nuclear arsenal for Beijing because of the 'limited value of China's conventional deterrent'.

In addition, Marshal Nie Rongzhen, the head of China's science and technology complex from 1958 to 1967, stated in his memoirs that China chose to develop nuclear forces over conventional weaponry in order to put an end to China's 'period of being bullied, humiliated and oppressed' (Lewis, 2004: 238).⁸⁸ Importantly, Chinese strategists did not intend to use nuclear weapons to intimidate or coerce others. This was because, according to the strategic thought of leaders such as Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, nuclear weapons were 'paper tigers' which could not achieve specific military objectives during wartime, so that, as Mao once said, 'with

⁸⁸ Christopher P. Twomey (2006: 7) identifies two periods where China felt this sense of humiliation and vulnerability to foreign nations. He describes how the first '100 years of humiliation' period 'began in the late Qing Dynasty as well as the earlier Warring States period (475 B.C. to 221 B.C.). Both these periods carry with them a clear lesson: a weak and divided China will be subject to substantial violence'. More recently, following the Opium war in 1841 'China was beset by a wide range of invaders: Britain, France, Holland, Germany, the United States, the Soviet Union, and—worst of all—Japan', underscoring this feeling of weakness.

only atomic bombs and without people's struggles, then atomic bombs are meaningless' (Fravel & Medeiros, 2010: 58).

Chinese strategists continue to view the threat of US military power—conventional and nuclear—as the main reason to possess nuclear weapons. Stability and continuity in the face of such external threats are thus among the key defining features of China's approach to the bomb. This approach has also been informed by the Communist Party leadership's strategic plans and insights over several decades. As noted above, China's aim in becoming a nuclear power was to break the US and Soviet Union's 'great power monopoly on nuclear weapons' and avoid coercion (ibid). Indeed, retired Major General Pan Zhenqiang (2009: 33) states that China has always calibrated its nuclear posture in response to 'the threat posed to it by the United States' nuclear strategy'. The key strategic factors for China today thus remain concern regarding the US's presence in East Asia and its policy of containment. Given the US's conventional superiority, China thus fields its nuclear arsenal as part of a central deterrence strategy. Yet China's recent moves to secure and seize territory in the South China Sea and the long-running dispute over Taiwan's status have also taken on a nuclear aspect. Analysts such as Jing-Dong Yuan (2009: 35) have therefore noted the need for greater dialogue between Washington and Beijing given the significant 'misperceptions and misunderstandings' between the two nations concerning nuclear weapons, deterrence and strategic stability, and how these issues might play out with regard to regional disputes.

Some, such as James Acton (2012: 40), point out that, today, China looks north to Russia and south to India regarding nuclear and other dangers. Others argue that China does not see Russia as a threat, but rather as benign and a partner it can work with to counter the US, though China is concerned about possible US-Russia cooperation on BMD because of Russia's ability to monitor Chinese ballistic missile launches (Hansell et al, 2009: 16).⁸⁹ In addition, the reemergence of Japan as a regional power, which is remilitarising, has the potential to build a nuclear weapon, is part of the US's extended deterrence network and which cooperates with the US on BMD, is of particular concern to Chinese planners (Kristensen et al, 2006; Hughes, 2009; Saalman, 2011: 35). Yet the fact remains that it is principally the US's threatening behaviour and its array of technologically advanced military capabilities that makes Chinese decision-makers consider the need for qualitative and quantitative improvements to their nuclear forces.⁹⁰ The key question here is the survivability of China's nuclear arsenal. In order to ensure a robust and survivable deterrent, China prioritises ambiguity and secrecy regarding its nuclear weapons system.

Moreover, as Jeffrey Lewis (2004: 12-13) notes, China's 'force deployments and arms control behavior' both suggest that the Chinese leadership is convinced that 'even a

⁸⁹ Interview: JA

⁹⁰ Examples of recent US actions and statements which have caused especial concern in China include: the 1991 Gulf War, the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1995 (including the destruction of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999), the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review which named China as a principal target and the second Gulf War in 2003 (Kristensen et al, 2006: 9; Hansell et al, 2009: 2).

very small, unsophisticated force maintained a measure of deterrence against larger, more sophisticated nuclear forces'. Thus, since acquiring the bomb in 1964, China has continued to possess only a small number of nuclear weapons, which have been 'based largely on a single mode of delivery, kept off alert and under the most restrictive declaratory posture—a categorical no-first-use pledge' (Lewis, 2009: 38). China thus invested significant sums in developing advanced military technology, though did not produce as many nuclear bombs as its 'resources, material, manpower and industrial capacity' allowed, because its leaders believed that a larger arsenal would not enhance deterrence (Ibid: 239-240).

Today China's estimated stockpile of 250 warheads is thus the fourth smallest of the NWS. China's 2010 Defence White Paper (2010: 6) described how it 'consistently upholds the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons, adheres to a self-defensive nuclear strategy, and will never enter into a nuclear arms race with any other country'. The paper goes on to state that China 'has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons'. Indeed, a set of proposals for how nuclear disarmament may be advanced are outlined, beginning with Russia and the US, who 'bear special and primary responsibility' for this task given the size of their arsenals. China's participation in 'multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament' will then occur 'when conditions are appropriate'. Chinese analyst Wu Zhan has suggested that such conditions would include Russian and US nuclear arsenals being reduced by 90–95%, plus an end to testing and production, though this action may only persuade China to agree to keep its arsenal at low numbers

(Saalman, 2009: 69).

7.2 Critical perspectives on the causes and consequences of Chinese nuclear possession and disarmament

As discussed above, the evidence for the security model concerning the causes and consequences of Chinese nuclear possession and disarmament make it, for this study, the outlier in terms of the relative explanatory power of *institutional democratisation*. At the same time however, there are limits to the mainstream and realist explanations discussed in Chapter Two that need to be recognised and engaged with. For example, the previous section showed that China—which has historically seen itself as the superior ‘Middle Kingdom’ and regional hegemon—had its status severely downgraded over several centuries. Nuclear possession can thus partly be explained by a desire for the recovery of national pride and regional leadership. The threat posed by the US following the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1946, needs to be seen in relation to China’s historic sense of external danger, so that there was no security dilemma driving the Communist leadership’s acquisition of the bomb.

In terms of evidence showing that *institutional democratisation* is of relevance to this case study, we need to draw on the work of China specialists who highlight the political importance of nuclear weapons for Beijing on the international *and*

domestic levels. For example, according to Jeffrey Lewis (2004: 239-240) and Nicola Horsburgh (2015), proponents of the Chinese nuclear programme in the 1950s and 1960s believed that the pursuit of the bomb would have benefits beyond security. In addition to uniting the country behind Beijing's rule, the bomb would help develop China's economy, science and technology so that it became an advanced nation. For Horsburgh (Ibid: 75), Beijing therefore saw possession of the bomb as 'crucial' in 'improving China's legitimacy and prestige domestically, regionally, and internationally'. Such 'imperatives' can, for this author, therefore be seen both in China's early nuclear efforts and the more recent modernisation of its military.

In addition to applying *institutional democratisation* at the domestic level for the Chinese case, it is therefore also useful to consider its international relevance given Beijing's foreign policy. For example, Shaun Breslin (2013: 631) argues that 'in China's view, there is still a lot to be done before the institutions of global governance become truly representative and democratic'. Until international institutions become more equitable, China will thus likely see its nuclear arsenal as an important way of retaining a seat at the top table of global affairs.

As noted in the previous section, China's nuclear arsenal has been subject to a high degree of opacity, which, the Chinese government argues, is vital to maintain the strategy of deploying low numbers of these weapons. Nuclear secrecy is common across NWS, the difference with China being that it is an authoritarian one party state without formally democratic institutions and an uninformed public on these

issues. Beijing is able to censor discussion of key issues pertaining to national security, as seen with the recent crisis regarding North Korea's nuclear programme where the BBC (2017) reported that Beijing had removed the search term 'hydrogen bomb' from popular websites. The lack of a free press or political opposition in China means that the public has no opportunity to play a role in nuclear weapons debates, which is conducted entirely behind the closed doors of an extremely secretive government (Dumbaugh & Martin, 2009). One poll conducted by the People's Daily newspaper states that '51% of respondents wanted nuclear disarmament while 49% did not' (Qiang, 2009). Yet it is reasonable to question how representative and thus useful such polling data is given how poor the condition of civil liberties is in China. National decision-making on security in China thus remains highly centralised in the top leadership as a matter of course. Yet, according to one Chinese nuclear expert I spoke to, at higher levels of civil society, for example, in academia and specialist media—there does exist some critical discussion of nuclear issues and future strategy which can have an influence on the thinking of ministers (Zhang, 2012: 25).⁹¹

Whilst Chinese nuclear policy-making is thus particularly opaque and difficult to map (Hansell et al, 2009: 5), it is possible to outline the key Chinese institutions with a stake in the nation's nuclear weapons system. These are the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the leadership of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the defence-

⁹¹ Interviews: RW; TZ

industrial and scientific community (Gill & Medeiros, 2010: 130). Although political power in China has generally become, 'diffuse, complex, and at times highly competitive', according to Kerry Dumbaugh and Michael F. Martin (2009: 2), nuclear weapons policy has remained closed and rigid. For example, Gill and Medeiros (2010: 130) argue that Chinese nuclear weapons decision-making has consistently been dominated by 'one person or of a small clique of key political individuals', including key members of the Central Military Commission of the CCP, which oversees the PLA.

These authors also suggest that the influence of the PLA over 'the formulation and operationalization of nuclear doctrine' and the 'R&D and procurement process for nuclear weapon, missile and command-and-control systems' has increased in recent times (Ibid: 151). This influence is also likely to grow as China's nuclear forces expand in 'size, technical sophistication' and 'mobility', which has implications for nuclear weapons decision-making as 'tensions could arise' between civilian and military constituencies, for example over doctrine and the size of China's nuclear arsenal. Overall, Gill and Medeiros (Ibid) conclude that Chinese decision-making on nuclear weapons is 'best understood as being under civilian control but lacking democratic accountability'. Thus increased military influence over the future direction of China's nuclear arsenal may well make arms control negotiations in this field more challenging, given that, as the authors of the James Martin Center report (2009: 5) note, the Chinese military is 'more suspicious of nuclear disarmament concepts'. This is despite the fact that nuclear weapons have significant opportunity costs for China,

given its high levels of poverty and relatively low spending on human development priorities such as health and education (Page & Thakur, 2013: 7-8). In terms of the prospects for *institutional democratisation* for the Chinese case, we may therefore conclude that, in the short to medium term, it is first necessary that China has a civilian rather than a military *guardianship* in control of nuclear weapons policy if future disarmament action is to be possible.

7.3 Chinese nuclear politics today

Having reviewed different theories concerning how and why China acquired the bomb as well as the barriers to Chinese nuclear disarmament, this section shall consider the state of Chinese nuclear politics today. In doing we shall further assess the utility of *institutional democratisation* for providing insight and understanding into how China might commit to nuclear abolition. As discussed in the previous sections, whilst there are several countries of importance to the future evolution of China's nuclear arsenal, the key determining factor is the behaviour of the US and its allies in East Asia. In addition to external influences, there are also important domestic factors—such as bureaucratic and political interests—driving China's nuclear weapons decision-making.

In recent years there have been several in-depth studies, of both Western and Chinese origin—some of which have already been mentioned—which shed light on

how the interaction between these internal and external factors have created the Chinese nuclear weapons system as it is today. These studies provide important insights into the domestic and international political obstacles that need to be overcome, and the opportunities that need to be seized upon, if China is to move towards nuclear disarmament. Studies of particular note, informing the discussion below, include: the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies report *Engaging China and Russia on Nuclear Disarmament*, which includes contributions from several authors,⁹² Lora Saalman's *China and the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review* and retired Chinese Major General Pan Zhenqiang's analysis *China's Nuclear Strategy in a Changing World Strategic Situation*. In addition, Shen Dingli, Bates Gill and Evan S. Medeiros, and Hui Zhang have made notable contributions to this debate. There is not space here to provide a full review of the increasingly rich literature on the necessary conditions for Chinese nuclear disarmament. Instead, I will highlight some of the most prominent issues and themes raised by the authors mentioned above.

A useful point of departure for our discussion is Pan Zhenqiang's (2009: 30) observation that China 'is not a nuclear weapon state in the traditional Western sense'. This is because China does not see nuclear weapons as 'essential instruments to help achieve political aims', whereas the US and Soviet Union, used them to 'intimidate other countries or control their allies', including through extended deterrence. The UK and France, meanwhile, saw nuclear weapons as a means of

⁹² Regarding China, these include Jing-dong Yuan, William C. Potter, and Cristina Hansell, Jeffrey Lewis and Lora Saalman.

maintaining some semblance of a global outlook and thus influence, with both arsenals linked to power projection and overseas intervention.

Thus, whereas the four other NWS have seen nuclear weapons as a means of realising their global political ambitions, China—as a much weaker power—has had domestic economic development as its main priority since the early 1980s (Shen, 2008: 642). China's nuclear strategy and policy is therefore configured in line with these ends. Until China's global strategic position significantly changes, nuclear weapons will therefore continue to play a defensive role, requiring only a small, survivable force. For example, Liping Xia (2009: 87) argues that in order to meet its national development objectives, China needs 'a long-term peaceful international environment, especially stable surroundings' and will therefore not act in ways that 'seriously disturb the current international economic and political mechanisms except when its critical national interests are threatened'. Moreover, according to the US Department of Defense (2014), China's need for international stability means that it will 'avoid direct confrontation with the United States and other countries'.

If China were to act aggressively this would jeopardise its push to modernise, because it requires 'extensive economic and technological cooperation with the outside world, both with its neighbors and with the West', according to Tiejun Zhang (2002: 84). At the same time, China is currently, as Noam Chomsky argues, 'seeking to break out' of the US's 'arc of containment in the Pacific', which limits China's 'control over the waters essential to its commerce and open access to the Pacific'

(McNeill, 2014). For Rex Li (2003: 214), Beijing wants to escape Washington's grip so that it can 'eventually become an economic superpower and a global strategic player' capable of replacing 'US domination' with 'multipolarity'. Coastal areas have thus come to be of particular strategic importance to China because they are where its main economic power centres are concentrated (Zhang, 2002: 85). As previously discussed, if current tensions are to dissipate, the US needs to therefore recognise China's interests in the region so that key disputes, for example, regarding Taiwan, the Korean peninsula and territorial and maritime demarcation are resolved and sustainable security agreements can be reached (CSIS, 2013: 5).

Without such agreements, it is highly unlikely that China will move towards nuclear disarmament. This is because, as Saalman (2009: 51) highlights, Chinese analysts see 'self-determination' and 'the belief that disarmament must not threaten a country's independence, sovereignty, or security' as amongst the core principles guiding China's approach to arms control and disarmament. Given that Beijing considers Taiwan to be part of China, rather than an independent nation, nuclear disarmament would compromise vital Chinese interests. This is because the fate of Taiwan is intertwined with both the legitimacy of the CCP and US regional military commitments and is thus, according to analysts from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the area where nuclear weapons 'would most likely become a major factor' (Lieber & Press, 2009; CSIS, 2013: 5).

Additionally, on the domestic front, if China is to transition to a non-nuclear identity

as a FNWS, its leaders will need to make strides in delegitimising nuclear weapons as a source of national self-esteem. This is because nuclear weapons compensate somewhat for its strategic military imbalance with Western powers by providing a sense of pride in the nation's technological prowess (McLean, 1986: 188; Zhenqiang, 2009: 51). According to one Washington-based analyst I spoke to, China also takes pride in having overcome various difficulties in order to achieve its nuclear status. Yet this has purposefully been a quiet type of pride, which has not translated into a deeper nuclear culture—potentially making the process of delegitimising nuclear weapons easier.⁹³ Moreover, as noted above, the long-standing diplomatic support China has given to nuclear disarmament and a global ban on nuclear weapons may ease an eventual transition to FNWS status (China MFA, 2013).

In terms of domestic political changes that may support *institutional democratisation* and smooth the path towards disarmament, Minxin Pei (2008; 2013) argues that whilst the CCP learned lessons from the fall of the Soviet Union and the Tianamen Square protests, China's authoritarian one party state, like all others, has a limited shelf life. Moreover, China's recent economic and social development puts it 'well into' a 'zone of democratic transition', so that democracy, he argues, could arrive through several different routes. Pei (1995) thus identified in the 1990s a 'creeping democratization' taking place in China whereby the necessary 'institutional foundations' are 'slowly taking shape'. Indeed for Vladimir Frolov (2013), China is presently 'more democratic than Russia' so that whilst the latter is 'faking democracy

⁹³ Interview: JP

to cover up an emerging dictatorship' the former is 'evolving into a more pluralistic system'. However, for Wei-Wei Zhang (2012: 60), it is 'unimaginable' that the Chinese people 'would ever accept' a 'multi-party democratic system'. Thus, as with the Russian populace, democracy in China will require the Chinese people to develop into an active and engaged citizenry with an enlarged social consciousness. Clearly, any such internal transformation will benefit from a stable regional security environment, both so that civilians rather than the armed forces can exert control over key policy areas and to enable military restraint—including on nuclear issues.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to assess the extent to which *institutional democratisation*, in comparison with other established theories, provides insight and understanding into the causes and consequences of Chinese nuclear possession and disarmament. Ultimately, for the Chinese case study, the security model is persuasive when outlining the origins of China's nuclear weapons programme. For example, China acquired its nuclear weapons to both counter the threats and coercion it faced from the US since the 1950s and put an end to China's long history of humiliation and oppression from outside forces. China's nuclear weapons system was then shaped by factors including the top leadership's assessment of trends in international security, resource constraints and the need for domestic economic development.

The utility of the domestic politics model can be seen when China's pride in its possession of the bomb is taken into account. Over time, bureaucratic and institutional interests thus found it useful to maintain the nation's nuclear status because the CCP gained legitimacy from having re-established China as a regional power. The limited nature of China's strategic ambitions during the Cold War and focus on internal development is also reflected in the restrained character of its approach to nuclear weapons, including its minimum deterrence policy.

To a significant extent, mainstream and realist approaches are also persuasive in identifying the international security requirements for nuclear disarmament. Despite the political, scientific and technological benefits of attaining nuclear status for the CCP, Chinese nuclear possession does not therefore seem to play as important a role in the nation's political system, economy, society and elite identities when compared to NWS with similarly sized nuclear arsenals—such as France and the UK. Thus, as General Pan Zhenqiang pointedly observes, because China has avoided using the bomb to further its international political aims, it 'is not a nuclear weapon state in the traditional Western sense'.

At the same time, because China—like Russia—is a regional hegemon seeking independence from Western containment, it does highly value its nuclear arsenal, albeit in a different way to Moscow. This is, again, primarily because of the historic restraint shown by China, which led to it developing a relatively modest and defensively focused nuclear force. In terms of disarmament, Chinese restraint and

disarmament rhetoric may thus facilitate an easier path to eventual abolition. However, given that China is an authoritarian one-party state, it is also clear that there are greater barriers to *institutional democratisation* than for the liberal democracies that are nuclear possessors, so that whilst it could play an important role in realising disarmament, democratisation is likely to take longer to develop.

In order for China to eventually move towards nuclear disarmament, it is first necessary for it to continue with its policy of nuclear restraint and to resist further building up its arsenal. The potentially escalating confrontation with the US and other powers in the Asia-Pacific region endangers this and requires attention at the highest levels so that the two nations can achieve a political settlement. Furthermore, Chinese analysts have presented a range of concerns and proposals that need to be addressed—principally by the US, but also the other NWS and Japan—if China is to cooperate on any process focused on nuclear reductions or disarmament. Absent international cooperation focused on making progress in these areas there will be little incentive for China's political leadership to alter its long-standing approach to nuclear policy, especially given that the domestic public and civil society debate on this issue that currently exists is far from being forceful enough to make the CCP reassess their options and change course, despite any signs of liberalisation that some analysts may have detected.

Chapter 8

Realising NWS nuclear disarmament through institutional democratisation

The preceding chapters of this study identified the need to improve upon mainstream and realist theories of nuclear possession and disarmament by introducing the concept of *institutional democratisation*. In order to assess the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation* in comparison to existing theory, these approaches were then discussed in relation to the five NWS case studies through an exploration of the relevant historical record and expert thought. Overall, it was found that the emphasis of mainstream and realist theories on external security threats as being the primary factor driving NWS's initial acquisition of nuclear weapons has limited value, being more relevant to some NWS—particularly Russia and China, for example—than others. Moreover, mainstream and realist theories cannot account for the important domestic political factors driving the pursuit and subsequent development and evolution of the bomb in each NWS over time. Crucially, mainstream and realist theories are also unable to provide a compelling account of how nuclear disarmament may be achieved and sustained, including what political forces will be required to realise NWS's transition to FNWS status.

In contrast, *institutional democratisation* is able to explain key aspects of nuclear possession and disarmament for the US, Russia, the UK and France, with China as a

lesser-included case. This is primarily because this approach provides insight and understanding into the domestic drivers of both the origins of nuclear acquisition and the development of nuclear weapons over time. Furthermore, *institutional democratisation*—as a theory of political change—improves upon mainstream and realist theories by identifying the key political obstacles to nuclear disarmament, principally at the domestic level but also internationally, and how these may be overcome through liberal and democratic reforms. It is also important to mention that *institutional democratisation* does not reject the security model's insights into the drivers of nuclear acquisition and possession, but seeks to add to and improve upon them where appropriate.

Whilst the case studies in Chapters Three to Seven discussed these different theoretical approaches to understand nuclear politics in and between NWS, it is necessary to provide an overview of how the NWS relate to one another as a group and also to place the NWS within the context of the global nuclear order. This is necessary to both understand how this group and this order operates and might, together, be transformed in ways supportive of nuclear disarmament. This is briefly done in this chapter to: i) show how the domestic politics of and strategic decisions made by NWS affect each other's approach to nuclear choices ii) produce ideas and strategies concerning how the elimination of nuclear arsenals might be advanced, focusing on the concept of *institutional democratisation* as it applies to principally the national, but also the international level.

This chapter addresses these questions by first reviewing possible actions and processes supportive of *institutional democratisation* in the NWS—involving the state, civil society and the public, for example—and how these responses may be developed to realise the proposed disarmament measures. The second section considers where the political will for these changes might come from, by summarising the primary obstacles to and opportunities for nuclear disarmament in and between NWS, as outlined in Chapters Three to Seven. Overall, the discussion is informed by the principles on which *institutional democratisation* is based i.e. democracy, transparency and accountability—which are essential for the creation of effective and legitimate processes and structures and if timely progress is to be made on eliminating nuclear weapons in and between NWS.

8.1 Institutionalising civilian and democratic control over nuclear weapons systems at a national level

Our previous discussion has shown that nuclear disarmament at the national level, as with the transition to denuclearisation at the regional and international levels, will look different and feel different for each of the NWS given the singular nature, including the nuclear and political histories, traditions and institutions, of each of these states. For example, the far greater scale of the Russian and US nuclear arsenals and their supporting political, military and industrial infrastructure, means that the task of moving to FNWS status will be a much bigger societal undertaking for these two states than for China, France and the UK. On the other hand, as Justin

Alger and Trevor Findlay (2009: 11) point out, France, Russia, the UK and US have experience of, and previously paid for, developing the facilities to dismantle the first generation of their nuclear weapon systems that they can draw on in future.⁹⁴

Therefore, at the same time as being aware of the differences between NWS, it is also important to recognise the commonalities between these states, both because, unlike the vast majority of NNWS, their polities have been shaped in significant ways by the possession of nuclear weapons and because of the types of activities involved in the process of eliminating nuclear arsenals. As discussed above, nuclear weapons systems are able to exist and be reproduced because political actors in each NWS have, over several decades, developed highly secretive and autocratic institutions that protect these weapons from popular social and political control. The citizens of NWS thus share the challenge of how they can develop governance processes, appropriate to their particular circumstances, that will allow nuclear weapons systems to be controlled, and their salience reduced, pending their elimination. This challenge may be eased, for example, through NWS (and other state and non-state actors) exchanging and sharing knowledge and ideas on disarmament practices, whilst safeguarding against proliferation by restricting access to sensitive information.

⁹⁴ Alger and Findlay (2009: 13) also suggest that the G8's *Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction* could provide financial assistance to any NWS unable to cover the costs of nuclear disarmament.

From a political point of view, transitioning towards FNWS status and implementing phased disarmament measures will thus require NWS to develop new political processes based on the principles of transparency and accountability to ensure civilian and democratic control of these weapons. It should be noted, however, that specifically democratic processes may be less important for Chinese nuclear disarmament on a domestic level, given the hitherto restrained nature of its nuclear weapons system as well as China's non-expansionist strategic culture and the greater immediate importance to China of a stable and non-threatening security environment. Notwithstanding the particular nature of the Chinese case, it remains the fact that each NWS must move towards a setup whereby the domestic political conditions that allow nuclear weapons to flourish are no longer present, or have been dramatically reduced. In this sense, *institutional democratisation* can be seen as a way to solve the domestic political issues created by NWS nuclear disarmament. It is therefore necessary and useful to give a sense of the specific practical ideas and processes supportive of NWS *institutional democratisation* that may be adopted by scholars and policy professionals working in this field.

i) Measuring democracy and the benefits of nuclear disarmament

As discussed in Chapters Three to Seven, mainstream analyses and indexes of democratic standards and civil liberties in NWS do not take into account the domestic political impact of nuclear possession. Yet, as we have seen, the nuclear revolution established highly-centralised nuclear weapons decision-making

processes in each NWS as part of military and political establishments, which then became embedded in each polity over time, impairing the knowledge of citizens and preventing their involvement in a key area of national policy. Whilst the implications of this institutional development differs for each NWS, for example, being more significant for the three Western liberal democracies than the two authoritarian states, and according to the scale of the nuclear arsenal, the importance of this subject requires further investigation to ascertain the impact on governance and have this reflected in methodologies assessing the health of a state's democracy.

Measuring what it means for a state to: i) possess nuclear weapons ii) maintain a sizable military establishment in terms of a state's regime type and democratic performance could potentially be done by introducing what Richard L. Merritt and Dina A. Zinnes (1993: 213) refer to as a 'multi-dimensional' indices to categorise regime type. This model, based on the work of Ted Gurr, Keith Jagers and Will H. Moore (1990), utilises several indicators to rank countries on 'two 0 to 10 point scales, one for institutionalized democracy and another for institutionalized autocracy' so that 'a country may thus rank high on one and low on the other...or rank the same on both'. It is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this study to apply this model to the NWS in order to rank them in terms of democracy and authoritarianism. However, given the difficulty in defining what democracy means in practice and the failure of mainstream methodologies to consider the impact of nuclear possession and military establishments on domestic political practices, such a multi-dimensional approach could provide a useful way to improve future studies.

Including such factors may also bring more scrutiny to bear on the otherwise often invisible and unknown areas of a nation's political life and show how nuclear disarmament and demilitarisation might act to improve the democratic process for nuclear possessors. Moreover, improving the accuracy of measuring regime type has implications for political and IR scholarship, given the prominence of ideas such as Democratic Peace Theory, as understood by Mearsheimer and Waltz, discussed in Chapter Two. For example, identifying the power and influence of military and nuclear establishments in the three NWS that are formally liberal democracies allows us to differentiate them from other states with apparently similar regime types. Developing such differences in categorisation may then help us explain why one otherwise 'democratic' state engages in conflict more or less than another over time.

ii) Implementing policies supportive of institutional democratisation in NWS

In the 1980s Hugh Miall (1987: 157-158) proposed a series of possible short-term measures that governments could take in support of moves towards nuclear disarmament. As well as being compatible with *institutional democratisation*, several of these proposals remain relevant today, particularly given the fact that all of the NWS are either in the process of modernising their nuclear arsenals, or plan to do so over the next few decades. They include: i) greater democratic, including parliamentary powers to control spending and procurement decisions on conventional and nuclear weapons ii) passing laws to prevent representatives of nuclear weapons laboratories and arms manufacturers from participating in nuclear

weapons decision-making iii) breaking up bureaucratic power that could resist popular disarmament initiatives by, for example, rotating officials to other departments iv) exerting greater political control over nuclear weapons laboratories to prevent new weapons research and development v) upgrading the status of arms control and disarmament within government, for example, foreign ministries to assess the impact of new weapons on 'existing and potential arms control agreements'.

In addition to such bureaucratic and parliamentary measures, the centralised war-making powers of the executive, which reach their zenith in the NWS's 'nuclear monarchies', also need to be restrained, alongside the salience of nuclear weapons being reduced in national security policies, for example, as proposed by Kennette Benedict in relation to the US (Ploughshares Fund, 2016). Supportive developments in the domestic sphere will be enhanced by progress made at the regional and international level, for example, involving conflict resolution and cooperation on arms control and disarmament, although, as has been previously outlined and which shall be discussed further below, these levels have varying degrees of importance for each NWS's attitude towards disarmament given these nation's different strategic circumstances.

iii) Improving public understanding of nuclear weapons and disarmament issues in NWS

In order for citizens and decision-makers in NWS to have a rounded understanding of these issues, the practicalities of nuclear armament need to be considered alongside the costs and benefits of disarmament. This is necessary if an NWS government is to develop a well-informed range of policy options that can be properly assessed, by their strengths and weaknesses, in national political debates. As previously noted, the size of NWS's disarmament task will be firstly affected, according to Findlay (2003), by the *degree* of irreversibility that is deemed necessary, for example, in the eyes of the international community, if a NWS is to become a FNWS. The required level of disarmament will naturally affect how long it takes and how much it will cost to, for example, decommission relevant weapons and equipment, dispose of fissile material, convert or scrap supporting military and industrial facilities and monitor and verify (through unilateral and multilateral measures) these processes. In addition, if a speedier disarmament process is required this will likely escalate costs. Notwithstanding the 'paucity of data' concerning the costs of eliminating nuclear weapons, largely due to the classified or inaccessible nature of much relevant information—including for previous dismantlement efforts involving nuclear weapons and facilities—Alger and Findlay (2009: 1) make the important observation that such costs 'pale in comparison to the financial burden of deploying, maintaining and upgrading nuclear arsenals in perpetuity'.

Improved understanding and communication to key audiences (for example, communities involved in or living near to nuclear-related facilities and trade unions involved in relevant production) of the practicalities of what nuclear disarmament entails, would benefit from studies being undertaken on the options involved in eliminating nuclear arsenals, for example, defence diversification and who should pay for the different parts of the process. For example NWS will need to conduct studies costing the dismantlement of their own arsenals, while multilateral bodies—Alger and Findlay (Ibid: 2) suggest the IAEA or a future ‘Nuclear Disarmament Commission’—will have to provide resources for multilateral monitoring and verification. At present amongst NWS, civil society groups in the UK, including Scottish CND (Ainslie, 2012: i), Nuclear Education Trust (2012) and the Nuclear Information Service (Burt, 2016), and in the US, including Stephen Schwartz of the Brookings Institution (2008), as well as Susan Willett (2003) for the UN’s Disarmament Research Institute, have undertaken the most detailed studies of this type, research that needs to be more widely disseminated and expanded across all NWS. This is particularly necessary in relation to local community groups and trade unions, both to alleviate their concerns regarding their jobs and skills and to increase their participation in developing alternatives to nuclear weapons-related work as part of a wider conversion of industry—away from military production and towards civilian goods and services.

8.2 Where will the political will for nuclear disarmament action come from?

In terms of the existing and potential sources of cooperative and progressive NWS action on nuclear disarmament that might take forward the proposals outlined above, Chapters Three to Seven of this study looked in detail at the key question of whether the requisite political energy might derive from small groups of political elites—as per the *guardianship* model—or from broader social movements—as suggested by *institutional democratisation*. Overall, the historical record proves former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme correct in his assessment that 'It is very unlikely that disarmament will ever take place if it must wait for the initiatives of governments and experts. It will only come about as the expression of the political will of people in many parts of the world' (ElBaradei, 2008). Palme's insight is corroborated by the preceding analysis of the politics of the NWS's nuclear weapons systems showing that NWS military and political elites and the institutions they inhabit and maintain have, in general, acted as the principal barrier to meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament.

For example, France and the UK are part of a 'P3' grouping, led by the US, which co-operates at a high level, including through working together on nuclear weapons development (albeit on a bilateral rather than trilateral basis) and policy. The leaderships of the P3 see nuclear weapons as symbolic of their nation's world power status and at the apex of their global power projection capabilities. Chinese and Russian elites also see nuclear weapons as necessary for access to the top table, but,

given their relative conventional military weakness and much more modest ambitions compared to the US, their nuclear strategies principally focus on central deterrence and regional influence to ensure regime survival and national sovereignty.

The key point here is that the wider character of Western NWS's defence and foreign policy, characterised by the 'control paradigm', needs to change if nuclear weapons are to be delegitimised and disarmament (and all this entails politically) embraced, with nuclear and other offensive forms of power replaced by conventional and defensive capabilities. This in turn requires domestic political movements with positive non-nuclear visions for national security and the strategies and strength to implement them over the long-term. Such popular movements are especially necessary in the US given the great size of its nuclear weapons complex which will take many years to dismantle and the need for China and Russia to be convinced that the US is committed to and will not deviate from demilitarisation and disarmament so that international order is reformed on a more equitable and cooperative basis.

Yet, as discussed in Chapters Three to Seven, significant political obstacles currently exist preventing a democratic transition supportive of nuclear disarmament in each NWS. For example, Tariq Ali (2015) has observed that in recent years France and the UK have been ruled by an 'extreme centre', made up of political parties with largely indistinguishable platforms that, in Peter Mair's (2006) words, preside over

'hollowed out' democracies. In the US meanwhile, Max Blumenthal (2010) argues that the Republican party has been 'shattered' following its capture by the radical right, with the Democrats now forming the moderate right. Western political classes are thus disconnected from the citizenry and becoming 'appendages of the state', whilst the citizenry have lost faith in and abstain from electoral politics (Mair, 2006). There are clear echoes of the West's predicament in Russia's own 'managed democracy' and the role the United Russia party plays as an outgrowth of the state, balancing the interests of oligarchs and rallying the population around the flag in times of crisis. Meanwhile, power in China's one party state is becoming more centralised, as new leader Xi Jinping 'steps forward as the strongman who defends the PRC's Leninist form of bureaucratic state capitalism', in the words of Jonathan Fenby (2015).

In response to the perceived failure of these political systems as well as a mounting distrust in elites, populist and nationalist movements have risen in recent years espousing putatively anti-elitist and anti-establishment politics. This has been seen in the US with Donald Trump, in the UK with UKIP and Jeremy Corbyn's Labour, in France with the Front National and Russia with Alexei Navalny of the Progress Party. Such groups need to be treated on a case-by-case basis as not all promote values and policies compatible with *institutional democratisation* and all it entails for disarmament. Indeed some of these movements either directly propose or contain prominent elements enthusiastic about maintaining or increasing military spending based on a belief in maximising national power and an appeal to unions and workers

in relevant industries. Furthermore, leaders and movements from an apparently progressive social democratic tradition, such as US Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, may still be in favour of US power projection and the maintenance of a strong military establishment. Given the fact that nuclear disarmament requires democracy and demilitarisation—at home and abroad—to be prioritised, emergent progressive political movements will therefore need to be persuaded or pressured to adopt and maintain such principles, where they are not already established, by activists inside and outside of these groups.

Disarmament by other means? Financial, safety and technological factors

Absent the development of popular movements within NWS focused on and capable of achieving disarmament in the near term, it is important to note the impact that financial, safety and technological factors have on nuclear weapons systems. For example, the cost and time overruns endemic to hi-tech military systems, the difficulty of maintaining core industrial skills related to nuclear weapons, the numerous safety and security incidents nuclear weapons are prone to and the possibility that submarines or even ballistic missiles may be made obsolete by future technological developments, could together mean that the costs and risks of nuclear weapons become so great that nuclear disarmament becomes the pragmatic choice for NWS decision-makers. Notwithstanding the fact that NWS governments have and will take steps to mitigate these problems, their cumulative impact certainly makes the process of reproducing nuclear weapons systems much more challenging.

At present the bureaucratic and technological momentum driving the nuclear enterprise in NWS seems capable of responding to threats to its future, although one cannot be certain that this will always be the case. In any case, these financial and technical problems are interesting to consider in terms of what the domestic causes of disarmament might be and how they differ in terms of what disarmament would then mean in terms of its political consequences. To give one example of this, if a future UK government framed its decision to disarm as a normative choice then this would very likely lead to problems for its relationship with France and the US, particularly if London then called on Paris and Washington to eliminate their own arsenals because these weapons were now seen as morally unacceptable. Leaked diplomatic cables published in 2010 illustrated this dynamic, with Paris in particular objecting to moves by then Prime Minister Brown and President Obama to question the legitimacy of nuclear arms (The Guardian, 2010).

Contrast this awkward situation with one where London framed a unilateral disarmament decision as a pragmatic technocratic choice based on cost grounds, with the resources from nuclear weapons being diverted to conventional forces—a stance which the UK's NATO allies would be much more understanding of and comfortable with. A technocratic disarmament scenario, whilst still of great moment, would also, potentially, minimize the impact on an NWS's bureaucratic and political structures compared to a normative scenario, as decision-making elites would likely seek to maintain their institutional power and realise their traditional strategic aims (for example, the P3's control paradigm) using other means. In any case, a

technocratic disarmament scenario is, at present, only plausible for France and, probably to a greater extent, the UK, given these nation's economic and political situations. For Russia and the US, whilst technocratic concerns are of high importance with regards to the future functioning of their nuclear arsenals, these weapons' political and strategic value outweighs such concerns for decision-making elites. As for China, a technocratic disarmament scenario is currently implausible given that Beijing is increasing its nuclear weapons budgets and technological competence, branching out into new platforms and delivery systems.

Thus, notwithstanding the current democratic malaise, the fact remains that the best-case scenario would be for sufficient political pressure to eventually develop so that each NWS takes unilateral steps supportive of disarmament that are not dependent on reciprocation from other NWS and that are in line with their NPT obligations. These steps variously include ratification of the CTBT and FMCT, security assurances, no first use declarations, ending horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation (including to other NWS and NAS) and stockpile reductions. Yet any unilateral moves are currently treated as politically unacceptable by Moscow and Washington, with the numbers game—covering warheads and delivery systems—having particular symbolic importance, whereby each wants to prevent quantitative inferiority for domestic political as much as international strategic reasons. Beijing, London and Paris meanwhile argue that they have exercised restraint and either reduced their nuclear forces after the Cold War or kept them at low numbers, so

that they will need to see substantial movement from the big two before they commit to further reductions or capping their nuclear arsenals.

Differentiating NWS responsibility for nuclear disarmament

As previously noted, in order to look beyond the numbers game and consider the politics of nuclear weapons in the round, it needs to be accepted that each NWS has a dual disarmament responsibility. This means that in addition to having an obligation to achieve national nuclear disarmament, each NWS also has an obligation to act in ways supportive of a NFWF, thereby encouraging other NWS's efforts to move to zero. A key issue here is how best to designate NWS in terms of their relative power and the structural nature of their relations. For example, mainstream analyses split the NWS into two main categories with Russia and the US as the 'big' nuclear powers and China, France and the UK as the 'small' nuclear powers. Given the size of their arsenals, Russia and the US have thus for several decades borne a special responsibility for creating a NFWF.

Whilst Russia's strategic power dramatically declined following the end of the Cold War, along with its ability to bargain with the US, China's rising economic and military strength drew it into an unstable 'great power' dynamic of cooperation, competition and potential conflict. Today, as Acton (2011: 23) argues, if Russia and the US's reductions are to continue beyond New START they want to see China,

France and the UK join them in a multilateral process before they reach the level of the big two. Whilst China's nuclear arsenal remains small and has not developed the same level of technical sophistication as the US and Russia, the potential for it to improve both quantitatively and qualitatively concerns planners in Moscow and Washington. For example, Acton (2012: 38) points out that 'the downward trajectory of the American and Russian arsenals risks colliding with the upward trajectory in China, India, and Pakistan'. Acton therefore proposes that 'the future evolution of the world's nuclear arsenals will depend principally on the interactions of five states' which 'form two triangles', so that 'the first consists of the United States, Russia, and China; the second: China, India, and Pakistan'. The key point being made here is that the process of reducing the big arsenals of the US and Russia beyond a certain level is now connected to regional powers with smaller arsenals, thus making the whole process much more complicated given the number of actors involved. Moreover, by this analysis France and the UK—the former imperial powers—play a peripheral role as their nuclear weapons are seen by Russia as 'extensions of the US arsenal'.

Scholars such as Acton (2011), Malcolm Chalmers (2012) and the Deep Cuts Commission (2014) have therefore recently investigated the political and technical conditions that would allow the US and Russia to move to low numbers of nuclear weapons, so that NPS arsenals contract and converge at a minimisation point, from which the more difficult move to zero might be made. Whilst there is much merit in these proposals, the key issue remains how the political will allowing them to be implemented may be summoned. The main weakness of these studies is that they

share a *guardianship* theory of political change that is embedded within the status quo whereby think-tanks, in close proximity to governments, make recommendations to bureaucratic and political elites. The aforementioned authors thus do not seek to criticise the undemocratic nature of Western NWS, discuss the limited sovereignty of France, Germany and the UK under US hegemony or imagine how Western NWS's political systems might be changed as in the past, for example, through domestic pressure and reforms. Such democratic developments are disallowed, presumably, for being idealistic or naïve. Yet ultimately what is really idealistic and naïve is to believe that significant improvements to major power relations and progress on nuclear disarmament can be made without the arrival of domestic political forces capable of exercising control over US and Western defence and foreign policy so that it is put on a responsible and sustainable path over the long-term.

Returning to Palme's point concerning 'the political will of people' around the world, thus leads us to observe that citizens of NWS have a particular responsibility to take political action that reduces the salience of nuclear weapons in their nation's security policies and that supports their other disarmament obligations. Just looking at the size of Russia and the US's nuclear arsenals may lead one to conclude that citizens of these nations have a particularly great responsibility here. Yet, it is also clearly necessary to be realistic about the ability of citizens in different countries to take meaningful political action given the level of freedom, including basic civil liberties such as free speech, in their country. If this proposal is accepted as

reasonable, given the oppressive nature of the Russian state and Russia's relative military weakness on the one hand and the US's more open and liberal society and military superiority on the other, it follows that US citizens have the greatest responsibility to move their nation towards nuclear disarmament and actions supportive of a NFWF.

Although there is not space here to fully outline the types of actions that US citizens could take towards fulfilling these responsibilities, this thesis has found that a key first step for individuals and groups will be to understand the wider political meaning, and thus the causes and consequences, of nuclear disarmament if they are to develop effective political strategies and tactics in the short, medium and long term. Providing a precise assessment of how wide the gap is between where US-oriented civil society groups (whose work has relevance to nuclear disarmament, as understood by this thesis) are today in terms of their political analysis and strategies, and the position these groups need to be in to form a movement capable of enacting the requisite social and political transition required by nuclear disarmament, is beyond the scope of this study. However, based on the findings presented above, which took into account the main groups working on nuclear issues, alongside wider progressive movements, including anti-war, environmental, peace and groups working for economic and social justice, it is possible to draw the initial conclusion that, US nuclear weapons and disarmament policy is not a high salience issue at present for most of US civil society and there is not a coherent and cohesive strategy

or movement of the kind that could exert the requisite pressure required for the necessary institutional changes.

In addition to looking at the political health of pro-disarmament groups on a domestic level it is also necessary to look at the international level. For example, a 2008 opinion poll conducted in twenty-one states around the world, found that ‘in 20 countries, large majorities—ranging from 62% to 93%—favoured an international agreement for the elimination of all nuclear weapons’ (World Public Opinion, 2008). Yet, as Lawrence Wittner (2010: 7) explains, despite the majorities in favour of an international ban on nuclear weapons, ‘such a ban was “strongly favoured” by only 20% of those polled in Pakistan, 31% in India, 38% in Russia, 39% in the United States and 42% in Israel.’ He therefore concludes that ‘it appears that today’s public opposition to nuclear weapons, although widespread, does not always run very deep.’ One might apply Wittner’s analysis to today’s political situation given that at the United Nations in July 2017, 122 nations voted in favour of a treaty banning nuclear weapons, yet in the short-term at least it is uncertain how much chance this treaty has of being implemented given the opposition of NPS (Sample, 2017). Advocates of nuclear disarmament, whether in national or international groups, therefore find themselves in a difficult strategic situation.

The main challenge such groups face is how they can pressure NWS governments to fulfill their legal obligations to disarm whilst not being able to purposefully draw on compelling and active public support. Such a means of pressure and influence has, in

the past, been of great importance—such as in the 1980s when fear of nuclear war was a key factor in the nuclear disarmament movement reaching the peak of its powers. Yet several of the activists, officials and scholars I spoke to for this study agreed that this sense of fear dissipated following the end of the Cold War, significantly reducing the salience of nuclear issues for citizens.⁹⁵ Today, most nuclear disarmament campaigners are still based in Western nations where, for reasons of history and the relative freedom of their societies, there is greater potential to reach and organise people around these issues. Yet such groups often have limited resources and matters pertaining to nuclear weapons generally tend not to be amongst people’s political priorities. Moreover, prominent recent initiatives such as the humanitarian approach and ban treaty proposal provides a universal moral and juridical response to the illegitimate power of nuclear weapons yet this approach may be criticised on the grounds that it tends not to look beyond the weapons themselves and provide a political analysis of the causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament, regarding institutional power and democratisation, for example. The need to differentiate between NWS based on their relative strategic power and thus their responsibility for disarmament is also not considered—a gap in the disarmament debate and these group’s political strategies that, owing to insufficient space here, will need to be addressed in future studies.

⁹⁵ Interviews: JA; PB; JG; NH

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the politics of nuclear possession and disarmament, examining the current debate on this topic amongst academics, campaigners, officials and the public as well as utilising insights gained from interviews with a wide range of practitioners. This was primarily done in order to develop an original and compelling political analysis that can explain the current disarmament impasse and construct a credible theory of abolition to inform progressive unilateral and multilateral disarmament action in and between NWS.

In order to do this, before exploring the particularities and practicalities of nuclear disarmament as it applies to NWS, Chapter One began with a more general investigation of the different ways that nuclear disarmament has been conceptualised and justified. On a technical level it was found that nuclear disarmament should be seen as a learning process, which builds on existing knowledge through several phases of elimination covering relevant capabilities, including: i) restraint ii) elimination iii) maintaining zero. As NWS pass from restraint to elimination towards FNWS status so the requirements of disarmament will become more onerous, in terms of the necessary resources and the degree of intrusion necessary to verify dismantlement of nuclear capabilities.

It was also found that the political process that will facilitate and evolve alongside the legal and technical instruments and knowledge required for nuclear disarmament—in particular for China, Russia and the US—will last several decades and therefore require close cooperation between NWS to provide focus to disarmament and ensure other political developments, such as regional conflict, do not derail the process. In addition, the more stable and peaceful regional and international politics are, the better for disarmament efforts which need time and space so that the philosophy of common security becomes embedded in the social and political life of NWS. Assuming the disarmament process goes ahead at some level, as it develops the degree of international cooperation and type of political structures necessary to achieve and lock in zero—including the extent to which power needs to be centralised at the international level given the dual-use nature of the nuclear fuel cycle—will become increasingly clear.

In terms of how nuclear disarmament has been justified, this chapter discussed what was termed the *disarmament first* approach, which has historically been advocated by nuclear abolitionists from both NPS and NNWS. Overall, what is most notable about *disarmament first* and what also distinguishes it from other approaches reviewed in Chapter Two, is that nuclear disarmament is seen as desirable both because it will eliminate something negative and morally repugnant from domestic and international society—nuclear weapons—and because this endeavour will bring the universal benefits of peace and social justice to humanity. The most powerful and compelling aspect of *disarmament first* is thus its normative and transformative

vision for humanity, spanning national boundaries, which has captured the minds of concerned citizens across the world, inspiring them to create a 'world nuclear disarmament movement'.

Disarmament first's strength as a response to the problem posed by nuclear weapons, and their unprecedented concentration of destructive power, is therefore that its absolute rejection of nuclear weapons—while apparently simple—provides a universal appeal to people's common sense of justice which, if accepted, is far-reaching in its implications for how society should be ordered. Moreover, in its more radical forms, *disarmament first* provides a response to power that would rupture the prevailing paradigm of achieving order through military dominance and represent a historic break in the pattern whereby state security, controlled by elites, is at the centre of political organization and planning by democratising decision-making.

Disarmament first thus presents a theory of political change focused on the need for popular struggles that can dismantle illegitimate power structures supporting and reproducing nuclear weapons to be developed in nuclear possessors—particularly the Western NPS. Given the strengths of the case presented by *disarmament first* concerning how and why abolition might be achieved, it was initially proposed that this study should consider how to adapt and update the theory of political change embedded in this approach, as utilised in the disarmament movement's 1980s

heyday, and assess how it may be applied to the technologically advanced strategic environment of today and the particular political circumstances of each NWS.

These insights regarding how nuclear disarmament has been conceptualised and justified raised the question of whom and by what means nuclear disarmament might be taken forward in each NWS and the opportunities for and obstacles to political change that pro-disarmament actors and groups face. Given that these are in part speculative questions concerning political transformations, it was necessary to consider what types of existing knowledge might provide insight and understanding in this area and what new ideas and information were required. Having identified the four areas of nuclear knowledge concerning NWS that were within the scope of this study to review, namely: i) nuclear possession ii) nuclear restraint iii) nuclear arms control iv) nuclear disarmament, Chapter One then briefly considered how the more practical, technical and pro-disarmament literature on nuclear issues relates to debates concerning political theory.

The main points made here concerned the fact that political theory, in particular international relations theory—for example, from the dominant realist school—includes influential and widely-respected discussions of nuclear possession and disarmament. Thus a study such as this, which seeks to examine the political causes and consequences of NWS nuclear disarmament, needs to engage with the leading scholars in this field, both to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their work and to, where appropriate and necessary, respond to their criticisms of and opposition to

nuclear disarmament. It was therefore necessary to provide a fully rounded discussion of the nuclear debate and identify ideas and approaches in the existing literature that would support the development of a speculative theory of nuclear disarmament.

Chapter Two took on this task by exploring existing approaches to nuclear possession and disarmament in mainstream and realist thought and scholarly critiques of realism. These included works that more or less strongly support nuclear possession and object to the idea of nuclear disarmament, for various reasons. Having reviewed the range of perspectives on the nuclear revolution—most of which primarily, if not exclusively, focus on the international security implications of the bomb—I identified several significant gaps and problems in the thinking of the constituent authors on nuclear and security issues, including disarmament.

For example, according to scholars such as Mearsheimer, Glaser, Waltz and Schelling—who strongly criticise or oppose nuclear disarmament—a disarmed world would be more unstable than a nuclear-armed world, may increase the probability of nuclear conflict and is, in any case, improbable given the various obstacles to international cooperation. Others argue that nuclear disarmament involving the great powers would generate security dilemmas, leading, for example, to conventional arms races given the difficulty of differentiating between defensive and offensive weaponry and the fact that states can't be certain about each other's

intentions.

Whilst these concerns and objections have some merit, they are not sufficiently powerful to demolish the case for nuclear disarmament. This is firstly because, as even those mainstream and realist scholars who strongly support nuclear possession—including Mearsheimer—note, it is not possible to be certain at this stage in history either of the impact that the nuclear revolution has had on international relations or that these impacts have been beneficial in terms of strategic stability. The fact that those objecting to nuclear disarmament on the grounds that it would lead to unacceptable levels of instability cannot prove that a nuclear armed-world is more stable and less likely to create nuclear conflict should lead us to question the veracity of their argumentation. When we do so, as in the case of Mearsheimer and others, such as O’Hanlon, who advocate a *security first* approach to arms control and disarmament, we find that the ‘stability’ they refer to principally concerns the narrow aims and interests of the US and its allies, rather than any universal conception of security. Yet US national security goals defined by elite decision-makers are, alone, not a legitimate basis on which to make judgments concerning whether nuclear disarmament is desirable or realisable. Rather, because this subject is of utmost concern to the security of both the entire US populace—and, for that matter, the world—we need to find an alternate, legitimate means of making judgments and decisions on nuclear issues.

Secondly, regarding the question of the security dilemma and the barriers to

international cooperation, including on disarmament, it was found that the security dilemma concept has limited explanatory utility in relation to the geopolitical situation involving NWS today. This is firstly because, as explored in detail in Chapters Three to Seven, NWS have developed domestic bureaucracies with a permanent interest in nuclear possession. The continuity of inherently conservative defence establishments thus protects nuclear weapons from external changes, even ones of great historical significance, such as the end of the Cold War. In addition, China and Russia are clear about the strategic power and intentions of the US and thus are not, at the highest levels, engaged in a dilemma of interpretation and response. This is because elite actor-coalitions in China and Russia have, in response to perceived US aggression, containment and expansion since the end of the Cold War, reached a consensus regarding the US's hostile intentions that connects with their historical sense of vulnerability to external threats and which presents them with a strong justification for maintaining the bomb.

Thirdly, *cooperation with disarmament* is an approach that seeks to solve the problems of arms control and disarmament at the international level, through elite level diplomacy. The main problem with this approach was summarised by Albert Einstein when he noted that, 'we can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them'. *Cooperation with disarmament* is thus, in its present guise, necessary (for example, given the political and technical requirements of abolition identified in Chapter One) but insufficient as a theory of nuclear disarmament. This is primarily because its analytical focus remains in large

part on international security and utilises a *guardianship* approach to arms control and disarmament, so that whilst domestic politics and questions of democratisation are sometimes noted, they are under-specified. It is therefore necessary to look elsewhere for the sources of political will that will sustain international cooperation pursuant to nuclear disarmament.

Given the strengths and weaknesses of the three approaches to nuclear disarmament reviewed above, it is possible to propose that an alternate approach which incorporates the strengths of *cooperation with disarmament*, with its realist grasp of how a state's geostrategic power might be ordered and *disarmament first*, with its powerful normative appeal and universally applicable principles, would potentially constitute a very fruitful way for NWS to achieve a sustainable nuclear disarmament process. However, gaps remained in terms of the need to update the *disarmament first* approach in relation to the current state of NWS nuclear politics, particularly on the domestic level, in order to identify the sources of political will that can sustain NWS cooperation supportive of disarmament.

I therefore proposed that a new approach is needed, which I termed *institutional democratisation*, to build on insights from global governance and civil society literature as well as social and political theory, for example, regarding domestic explanations of nuclear acquisition and what a normative theory of political change supportive of nuclear disarmament requires. The main political implications of *institutional democratisation* explored throughout this thesis are thus based on the

idea that the nuclear revolution has a second meaning that is not sufficiently explored in the existing mainstream and realist literature. This second meaning concerns the domestic political impact of NWS acquiring and developing the bomb and thus what eliminating nuclear weapons will entail for NWS on the domestic economic, social and political front.

Institutional democratisation can thus be summarised as the idea that the democratic deficit in the five NWS—including crucially the United States given its singular influence, power and global reach—needs to be addressed in order for there to be any prospect of NWS nuclear disarmament. In rebalancing the focus of analyses of the politics of nuclear disarmament from the international to the domestic level, *institutional democratisation* also engages with the problems of how anarchy may be mitigated or overcome and how future international institutions supportive of disarmament—including the more distant prospect of world government—may avoid descending into tyranny by ensuring just and equitable relations through popular engagement and participation in decision-making.

With regard to the problems posed by anarchy, *institutional democratisation* focuses on the domestic sources of international cooperation and obstruction regarding nuclear arms control and disarmament efforts. The argument here is that there are significant constituencies that exist within NWS supportive of nuclear arms control and disarmament, yet the authoritarian politics and democratic deficit that variously exists within each NWS means that citizen preferences on nuclear issues—where

identifiable—are mostly not reflected in government policy. The potential for international cooperation pursuant to nuclear disarmament (again, particularly in the US) thus exists but is not being realised, often because of domestic bureaucratic and political obstruction in NWS as well as these government's wider strategic goals. Moreover, the secrecy and misinformation surrounding nuclear issues, often purposefully fed by pro-nuclear governments and their supporters, has led to the publics of NWS being misled regarding the actual costs and risks of nuclear possession. Thus, where the costs and risks of maintaining and modernising the bomb are known, it is likely that support for nuclear disarmament will increase—which again highlights the need for *institutional democratisation*.

Having provided this initial assessment of mainstream and realist thought regarding the nuclear revolution, Part Two of the study focused on showing how *institutional democratisation* adds value to the existing literature regarding the causes and consequences of nuclear disarmament for each NWS. To repeat the point made above, the challenge here was that explaining the causes and consequences of nuclear possession is much more straightforward than imagining the causes and consequences of NWS disarmament. Any theoretical 'test' in the latter area is thus based on far more limited data and is thus inevitably incomplete and speculative since it covers something that has and is not happening.

Despite the challenges involved in this endeavor, I have argued that it is possible to make headway in this area to provide some meaningful insight and understanding

into NWS nuclear disarmament. In order to do this, Chapters Three to Seven provided a set of five in-depth case studies of the nuclear weapons systems for each of the NWS in order of their acquiring the bomb: US, Russia, UK, France, China. Over these case studies, the initial assessment provided in Chapter Two regarding the gaps and problems with the mainstream and realist literature was confirmed, as was the potential contribution of *institutional democratisation* to the nuclear debate. This is primarily because it was found that whilst the security model does a good job, in some cases, of explaining the international security causes and consequences of NWS nuclear acquisition and development, it still only provides a partial picture. The key point here is that without a full grasp of why NWS seek—and then continue to possess and develop—the bomb, it is not possible to identify the politics of nuclear disarmament for each NWS.

Before further outlining the weaknesses of mainstream and realist thought in this area it is necessary to acknowledge where these approaches are valuable. For example, through focusing on the international security aspects of nuclear acquisition, realist thought impresses upon us the different external security threats motivating Russia and China, in particular, to seek and maintain possession of the bomb. Moreover, in terms of the international security changes required for nuclear disarmament, realism reminds us that it is not reasonable to argue that NWS disarmament or a NFWF will be the same world as today, just without nuclear weapons. US military power in Europe and East Asia is perceived as a threat to Russian and Chinese sovereignty and drives decision-makers in Moscow and Beijing

to rely on nuclear deterrence to ensure regime survival and protect their interests at home and in their near abroad. Rather than dismissing mainstream and realist approaches for their flaws and scepticism regarding disarmament, *institutional democratisation* thus seeks to build on and incorporate the valuable insights provided by such approaches where appropriate and necessary.

The fact remains, however, that there are clear problems with mainstream and realist approaches that must be recognised. For example, despite being able to identify past and present international security challenges associated with the bomb, the security model cannot fully explain two aspects of nuclear politics: i) the continued possession and development of the bomb over time ii) nuclear disarmament. This is firstly because mainstream and realist thought strongly tends to focus only on the international rather than both the domestic *and* international political significance of the bomb, including the impact nuclear possession has on NWS's political structures and practices. Secondly, mainstream and realist thought often exhibits a pessimistic attitude towards political change, so that nuclear possession is seen as inevitable and disarmament unrealisable, despite the significant levels of domestic and international public support for abolition and the potential for social movements to achieve progressive shifts in policy. Where mainstream and realist studies do propose arms control and disarmament steps, for example, as part of the *guardianship* model, these are thus generally based on the assumption that the political energy for action will emerge from existing power structures and primarily involve international diplomacy.

However, I have argued that the *guardianship* theory of political change misunderstands the full implications of nuclear disarmament, which, because of the second meaning of the nuclear revolution, fundamentally involves a transformation in the domestic *and* international politics of NWS. Moreover, it is improbable that left to their own devices, the powerful people controlling the bomb will dismantle and surrender the institutional power that they and their predecessors have built up over decades, even if some among them do not believe in nuclear deterrence or value the bomb as highly as during the Cold War. The weight of the status quo manifested in the permanent bureaucracies reproducing the bomb, and the aversion to being seen as responsible for relinquishing, what is believed to be, a crucial aspect of national power thus prevents NWS political leaders from making any significant steps towards zero.

It therefore may be optimistic yet still reasonable to believe that existing elites and institutions, via the *guardianship* model, may gradually enact more enlightened policies of arms control, non-proliferation and restraint, for reasons of 'strategic stability'—as has sometimes been done in the past following international conflict or crises—or in response to cost pressures or technological developments. What is not reasonable or realistic, firstly, is to believe that business as usual can continue without a high-salience and more dangerous nuclear order emerging as permanent bureaucracies in NWS, characterised by continuity and seeking to maintain and expand their power, seek to optimise the effectiveness of nuclear arsenals by producing ever more advanced and potentially threatening weaponry. At the same

time, such complex modernisation efforts are increasingly costly and difficult—particularly for the US and Russia—requiring advanced industrial skills and significant resources, which may act as a brake on the speed with which these systems can be successfully deployed.

Given the limitations of mainstream and realist thought in this area, the value of *institutional democratisation* can be seen in its ability to fill in the gaps regarding why states acquire the bomb, explain the particular ways in which states develop the bomb and consider how states may eliminate the bomb—by, in the latter case, providing a viable theory of political change. *Institutional democratisation* does this by bringing in important domestic factors such as the weight of history, scientific and technological prestige as well as the economic and political benefits of nuclear possession and development and how these take root in NWS over time.

In terms of specific findings for the five NWS, the conceptualisation in Chapter Two of nuclear weapon systems as fundamentally incompatible with democracy because shrouded in secrecy, with decisions regarding their development and use concentrated in small, closed, elite groups at the top of state hierarchies, were confirmed in the NWS case studies. The political and strategic circumstances and mindsets of World War Two and the early Cold War informed the early growth of these institutions, with huge military establishments being maintained in the US and Russia, and to a lesser extent, the UK and France. As noted above, these institutions were powerful and resilient enough to ensure the survival of the bomb following the

end of the Cold War, when the principal justification for Western nuclear possession—the threat of international revolution posed by the Soviet Union—disappeared overnight. Today, to different degrees and in different ways (with China more of an exceptional case given its history of restraint and focus on national development) the nuclear weapons systems of NWS are thus out of complete political and even human control, given the domestic momentum: including economic, bureaucratic and technological factors, driving modernisation.

In terms of the civilian and democratic control of nuclear arsenals, whilst formal democratic channels for setting the parameters of and influencing policy remains present in the US, including through Congress, this is less the case in France, where the acquisition of nuclear weapons was tied up with the development of the Presidency during the establishment of the Fifth Republic and the search for a renewed 'grandeur' after WW2. Indeed, the US Congress provides more checks and balances, including the power of the purse and greater freedom of information than the British and French parliaments. The UK meanwhile, with its history of anti-nuclear activism, is perhaps the state that has come nearest to abolition, as no other Western NWS has come close to electing a party promising unilateral disarmament in its election manifesto. At the same time as the British Labour party was unilateralist and committed to leaving NATO in the early 1980s, the Soviet Union under Gorbachev took on the power of the military-industrial complex and reshaped security policy in such a way that deep cuts to nuclear forces took place and abolition was put on the table as a serious option. Yet the Reagan administration

chose to maintain the US's quest for global hegemony and nuclear superiority, a project taken up by each successive administration. The end of the Cold War thus did not lead to disarmament and a peace dividend but NATO expansion and a restructured nuclear weapons complex capable of targeting emerging threats to the US in developing nations as well as traditional opponents.

Elsewhere, Chinese planners have historically seen a much more limited role for the bomb than the other NWS given their focus on central deterrence, economic development and pursuit of a non-expansionist grand strategy. This restraint, whilst currently being tested by US containment and the regional ambitions held by some in Beijing, suggests that official Chinese support for abolition is more than rhetorical so that China would be more receptive to a disarmament process begun by the US than France or Russia, whose military and political establishments, for unique historical and strategic reasons, have a deeper and more symbiotic attachment to the bomb and the culture of nuclear possession.

Having shown the explanatory power of *institutional democratisation* regarding the politics of NWS nuclear possession and disarmament in Chapters Three to Seven, Chapter Eight then moved on to consider the political implications of *institutional democratisation*, to show its value as both a critical approach and problem-solving tool. This was done over two main areas, including a review of possible actions and policies supportive of disarmament that could be taken and enacted by NWS at a

national level, and an assessment of the state of pro-disarmament political forces in each NWS in relation to NWS's dual nuclear disarmament responsibilities.

With regards to the specific practical ideas and processes supportive of NWS *institutional democratisation* that could be taken forward, three areas were highlighted: i) the need to develop measurements of authoritarianism and democracy in NWS that reflects the costs and risks of nuclear possession. This is necessary in order to both better appreciate the political benefits of nuclear disarmament and more accurately define a state's regime type ii) the need for NWS to implement progressive policies at a governmental level to ensure that nuclear weapons are subject to democratic, transparent and accountable processes iii) the need to improve public understanding of nuclear weapons and disarmament in NWS as a means of developing greater popular engagement with and participation in decision-making on security issues.

Based on this study's claim that each NWS has a dual responsibility for nuclear disarmament, covering action both at a national level and an international level—that supports other NWS taking action to disarm—the second section of Chapter Eight then considered the current health of pro-disarmament movements in each NWS and globally to assess the potential for action supportive of *institutional democratisation* to be realised in the near term. With regard to the strength of the global nuclear disarmament movement, it was found that the campaign groups in Europe and North America which arose in the 1980s calling for disarmament were of

a far greater size and more wide ranging and radical in their politics than most of the disarmament movement of today—including, for example, a better appreciation of the structural and economic aspects of nuclear weapons systems. The decline in activism and shift in political focus coincided with, and was likely a result of, the co-option of the more mainstream and conservative wing of the peace movement by the political establishment in the US, the overall decline in genuinely left-wing politics from the mid-1980s onwards, the perceived reduction in the nuclear threat following the end of the Cold War and the focus of progressive groups on other issues that were seen as more pressing.

The case for supporters of nuclear disarmament today to focus primarily on the US is thus a strong one given its power and the fact its behavior has a decisive influence on all nation's nuclear weapons decision-making. In addition, because all NWS governments need to be persuaded or pressured to realise their dual nuclear disarmament obligations, pro-disarmament campaign strategists need to think carefully about where they devote resources and how they frame the issue so that Western-centric perspectives do not predominate. In considering this we must recognise that some, perhaps the majority, of those who spend most time working for NWS nuclear disarmament do so from within the NWS of which they are citizens—principally the UK and US—but also across Europe, Japan and Australasia.

The reason for doing so seems clear and practical, individuals and NGOs are far more likely to be able to influence decision-makers if they are citizens of that nation

through established processes of accountability. Clearly, prevailing political conditions, for example, levels of democracy and freedom in each NWS will affect how easy or hard it is to do this. Furthermore, it is clear that citizens and groups working in nations which are relatively more liberal, democratic and secure, in particular the UK and US, with France a lesser included case, have greater access to resources and channels of influence than those living under less democratic or free regimes such as China and Russia.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that the lack of an effective review process in western, formally democratic NWS and the lack of public accountability of those shaping nuclear decisions, offers more similarities than differences with the process of nuclear weapons decision-making in Beijing and Moscow's more authoritarian regimes. This raises the question of how influential individuals and groups outside of the upper echelons of the bureaucratic, military and political elites can be even within relatively free societies with at least formally democratic institutions, such as the US. Moreover, whilst research conducted in several democracies, including in Europe, Japan and the US, found that where anti-nuclear weapons public opinion, protest and civil society activism exists, it has exerted an influence on the degree and type of action taken by governments, it must be also be recognised that the deep secrecy surrounding nuclear weapons systems and an often supine media has clearly acted as a brake on the level of public engagement in and action on these matters.

Such findings go some way to explaining why, despite nuclear disarmament advocates in the West campaigning for decades on this issue, nuclear weapons systems—and the institutions that produce and run them—have remained so resilient to outside pressure and why, as several leading disarmament activists have attested, there has been a turning away by the public from nuclear issues, despite pro-disarmament views remaining widespread. In addition, if citizens of NWS cannot meaningfully influence their own nation's nuclear weapons decision-making, then what does this mean for citizens of other nations who wish to change the nuclear weapons policies of NWS? One might initially and reasonably speculate that their potential influence would be significantly weaker given that decision-makers are more responsive to the demands of their own citizenry.

However, it is also reasonable to expect that the answer to this question will, as I mentioned above, also depend upon the nature of the relationship between the two nations involved. For example, the more powerful a nation or group of nations is, the easier it will be for them to influence the behavior of an NWS, or for that matter, an NNWS. Following this logic, we may expect that the ability of citizens and civil society groups to influence the behavior of other nations will increase in relation to the power of the nation in which they undertake political action. To complete this line of reasoning, depending on their relative freedom and access to resources, the citizens of NWS themselves have a special responsibility to ensure that their governments realise their dual obligations to achieve national nuclear disarmament and act in ways supportive of a NFWF.

I have therefore argued that the political analysis of nuclear weapons and what the bomb means in terms of domestic and international power, which developed out of the struggles against the bomb in the 1980s, should be revived today and applied by disarmament advocates to the contemporary strategic environment. There is great potential here for peace and disarmament activists to link up with campaigners working in other related progressive political fields, such as conflict, climate change and development to develop a radical critique of power and propose short, medium and long-term measures supportive of a transition to more equitable and just societies. Indeed it is likely that movements with a wider social base and goals, which can draw on greater public support and resources, will be essential if economic elite domination and cultures of militarism are to be replaced with democratic, participatory economic and political systems capable of demilitarising NWS.

In terms of the limitations of this thesis, in addition to the necessarily speculative and thus incomplete nature of the study, time and space places inevitable restrictions on the areas which I have been able to provide in-depth investigations of. The first area to highlight in this regard concerns the politics of the global nuclear disarmament movement. This includes, for example, how movements might be organized to respond to the power embedded in nuclear weapons systems and how demographic trends may interact with future possibilities for nuclear disarmament, for example, concerning whether younger NWS citizens who did not experience the Cold War may be less supportive of nuclear possession and more amenable to disarmament. Partly, this is a result of the limitations of the data in this area. For

example, public opinion data on nuclear issues varies significantly in terms of consistency, scope and quality across NWS—with far more information available for the UK and US—whilst useful assessments of the recent impact of advocacy efforts in this field are few and far between.

Secondly, there was not space to closely consider important issues such as the connection between the politics of civil nuclear energy and nuclear weapons production, the potential for NWS to move to recessed or virtual nuclear arsenals as an intermediate step on the path to abolition, or possible future military technological advances (for example, cyber and underwater) and the implications these might have for nuclear weapons systems and proliferation. Thirdly, the theory of nuclear disarmament for NWS developed here, focused on *institutional democratisation*, did not consider the previous examples of voluntary or enforced disarmament involved the former Soviet states, Iraq and Libya. In terms of future studies, it would be possible to apply the methodology utilised in this thesis to the aforementioned questions in order to consider the politics of a NFWF, but potentially disarmament involving other WMD, such as chemical and biological weapons and conventional weaponry. The challenge of developing new and sustainable multilateral agreements governing fissile material and related military capabilities would, in particular, benefit from further study.

Fourthly, I was not able to specify—for example, according to the particular political circumstances of each NWS—the precise degree of *institutional democratisation*

required for each NWS in order to move towards and achieve a sustainable nuclear disarmament process. Future studies might look at this in terms of the balance between civilian and popular, participatory involvement in defence and foreign policy decision-making and acceptable levels of involvement by the military and established *guardianship*. Answers to this question may only become clear over time as the disarmament process unfolds, and in relation to another issue which I touched on, but could not explore in depth—namely, the degree to which NWS military establishments need to adopt non-offensive, defensive postures and demilitarise so that the threat or use of force are delegitimised as instruments of state policy.

Fifthly, I was not able to provide in Chapter Eight a full summary of the regional or international politics of nuclear possession and disarmament and implications of *institutional democratisation* for NWS as I would have liked to. For regional nuclear politics, this could have covered how NWS relate to their neighbours, for example, in Europe and East Asia in particular, and institutions such as the EU, NATO and SCO as well as what alternative security and political arrangements might be required in future if nuclear disarmament is to be realised. At the international level, as noted in the Introduction to this study, I chose not to incorporate an in-depth analysis of the global politics of nuclear disarmament, including the NAS (DPRK, India, Israel and Pakistan) and the nuclear capable states. Whilst I did discuss how the dynamics of international nuclear politics relate to NWS in the case studies, this could have been explored further when summarising relations in Chapter Eight. In addition, it was not possible to include a discussion of how the responsibility gap in NWS nuclear

disarmament might be addressed. This topic could be explored in future by developing an appreciation of each NPS and NNWS's relative strategic power, across the qualitative and quantitative range of military capabilities and the doctrines that guide them and how these capabilities and doctrines interact and affect each possessor's security and threat perceptions.

To conclude, one of the main implications of this thesis for future studies of nuclear disarmament is for practitioners working on nuclear issues from different backgrounds to listen and learn from one another in order to break out of established and limited ways of thinking. For example, it is a mistake for disarmament campaigners to treat nuclear weapons solely as abhorrent societal artefacts and not consider the insights concerning conventional capabilities, threat perceptions and elite understandings of national security across NWS provided by mainstream studies. It is also a mistake to ignore, as some mainstream studies do, the structures of undemocratic economic and political power within which nuclear weapons are embedded, the institutional analyses of liberal and left-wing authors and the vital role of popular movements in nuclear disarmament, both past, present and future.

In terms of the future of nuclear disarmament, there is a strong case to be made that the politics of nuclear weapons and climate change in particular should be seen as the politics of survival. Without the emergence of strong and diverse popular movements, particularly in the US and its allies, to increase pressure for

disarmament action and eventually preside over state institutions to control the power of nuclear weapons pending their elimination, the prospects for scientific societies to continue existing and provide decent lives for people over the long-term may fast diminish. This study has found that the type of politics that will allow NWS to achieve nuclear disarmament is therefore universal, moral and democratic. To ensure humanity's common security and survival, citizens across the world must come together to ensure that such principles guide NWS's economic and political decision-making at a fundamental level, a process that necessitates *institutional democratisation*.

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